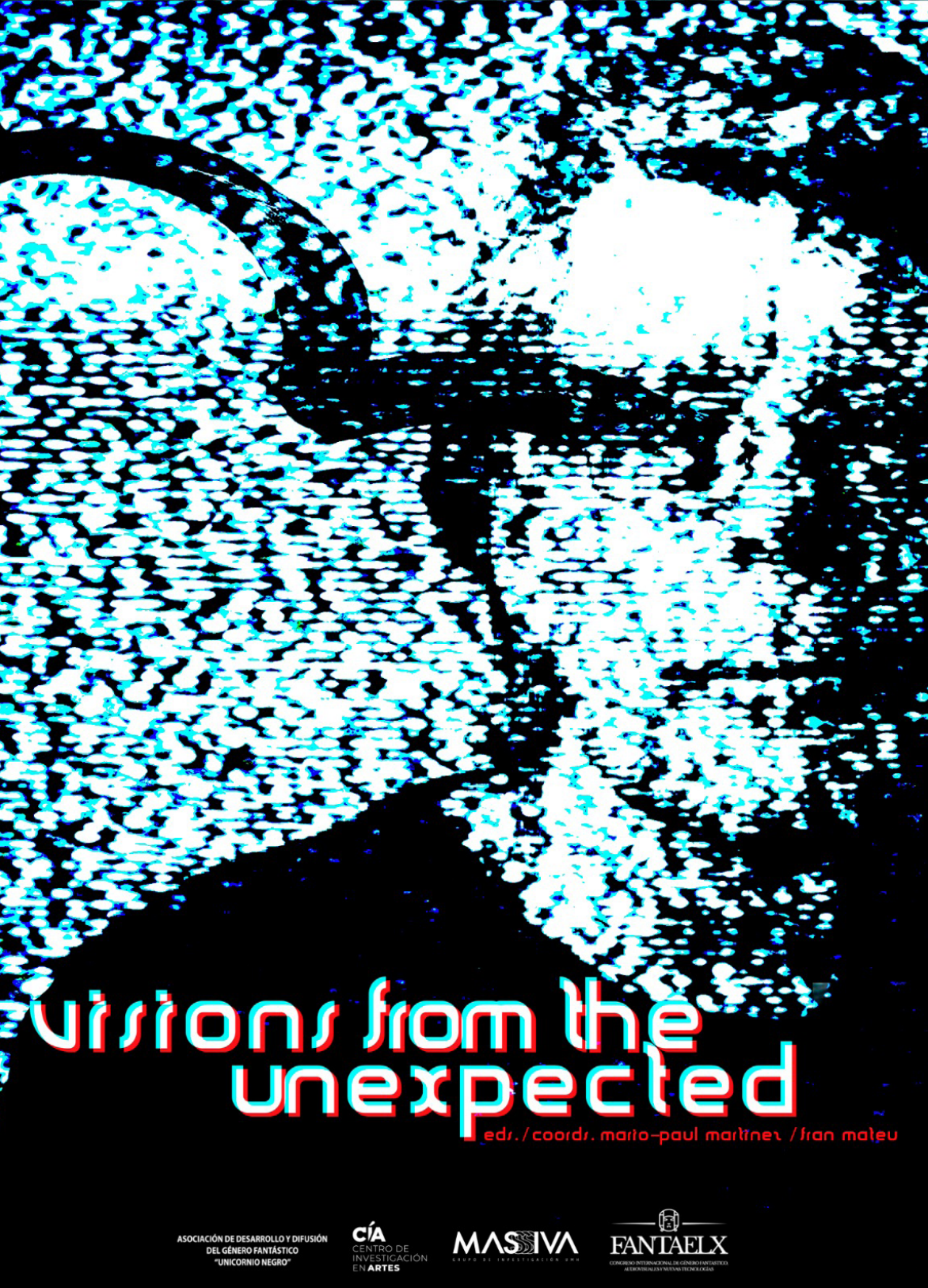

visions from the unexpected

edrs./coordrs. mario-paul martinez / fran mateu

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Visions from the Unexpected

Authors: Mario-Paul Martínez Fabre, Fran Mateu, Marta Miquel-Baldellou, Raúl Fortes-Guerrero, Inês Garcia, Mikel Peña Sarrionandia, Alberto Rodríguez Gómez, Elisa Martínez and María Amor Díaz García.

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congreso@festivalcinefantaelx.com

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THE UNEXPECTED IN THE FANTASTIC GENRE

Mario-Paul Martínez Fabre and Fran Mateu

When the unexpected is permeated by the fantastic

Umberto Eco (1970, p. 183) said that information has value when it is linked «to the unexpected, to the unforeseeable, to the original». The unexpected, in this sense, is circumscribed around that which we had not foreseen would happen: when something suddenly and unpredictably appears before us. In the context of fiction, this is an aspect that is less and less frequent due to the current overloaded cultural ecosystem, where demanding users are less and less invaded by the unforeseeable (at least from the Italian author's point of view). To this effect, Mark Fisher (2018a, p. 32) observed that the slow cancellation of the future –a future that is already obsolete because it does not arrive and that seems the ghost of our culture– has been accompanied by a deflation of our expectations. If we have no expectations, the unexpected can be permeated by the uncanny, that is, by what should not be there (Fisher, 2018b, p. 12) or should not happen in such a way, which will always depend on the historical and socio-cultural context. Think, for example, of the film *Ab-Normal Beauty* (Oxide Pang Chun, 2004), set in a historical context where it is considered strange to photograph people who have died in a certainly unexpected way. Nowadays, however, it is becoming more and more frequent simply because we always have a *smartphone* with us, which has led, as José Javier Marzal (GICID, 2021) argues, to the fact that we are no longer witnesses to events, but rather recorders of images. It is in this context that we are

becoming increasingly accustomed, amidst a state of automatism and lazy anxiety, to attending to, or even forcing, the unexpected in order to give greater meaning «to the photo».

The future of the unpredictable, as a next level after the cancellation of the future we expected –announced by Fisher and previously predicted by Berardi (2014)– places us before a postmodern temporal rift where the specificity of the fantastic is at ease. It is, in our opinion, a fractured space, from which the fascination for the strange thrives, and for the resulting dialogue between the beauty and ugliness of that which we do not know (Fisher, 2018b, p. 21); both always present throughout our culture (Eco, 2017, p. 131). It is there where artists of the present pick up and insufflate us with doses of new perplexity, as is the case, for example, of Stephen King in literature, Alan Moore in comics or David Cronenberg in cinema, among many other authors who are akin to these fields. Regarding the latter, his recent film *Crimes of the Future* (2022), for example, adapts the unexpected to *body horror*, the hallmark of his cinema. This is where we find the premise of his narrative: the appearance of unexpected organs in our bodies opens the doors to a whole new order (social, cultural, political, etc.), for a world in need of new vital perspectives; a proposal that, to a certain extent, can be as unexpected and as advanced in its time as it can be assimilated with the passing of the years.

Figure 1: *Crimes of the Future* (Cronenberg, 2022).

This compilation, titled *Visions from the Unexpected*, takes up this fractured space where the unexpected crosses the fantastic to, as Fisher (2018b, p. 23) would also point out, construct a suspension between the sinister, the strange and the marvellous. To this end, we propose seven chapters, in which the international authors who have participated in the edition analyze this encounter from fields as heterogeneous as literature, film or animation, and even from other fields, in principle less «expected», as is the case of the educational classroom.

New visions from the fantastic unexpected

In the first chapter of this book, under the title «Their *First Impulse Is to Reach for Their Cell Phones»: Stephen King Revisiting and Updating Technophobic Fears in Cell*, Marta Miquel-Baldellou identifies the intertextual links between Stephen King's novel, *Cell* (2006), and techno-horror classics, pointing out how King's novel contributes to the updating of the genre, analyzing the narratological differences in relation to its literary and cinematic predecessors, mainly through the analysis of current discourses on ageing, new technologies, consumerism and globalization. In his non-fiction volume on horror literature and cinema, *Danse Macabre* (1981), Stephen King classifies technophobic fears as those ingrained personal fears that we all must face (King, 1981, p. 156). Although the master of horror acknowledges that technological advances have led to a higher standard of living, he has also identified fears derived from new technologies, such as human subordination to machines and the illusion of human control over technologies, which is evidence of the current popularity of techno-horror in contemporary popular fiction. In this sense, in his techno-horror novel *Cell*, Stephen King describes how a malfunction in the global mobile phone network turns mobile phone users into frenzied zombie-like beings.

As Miquel-Baldellou notes, by dedicating his novel to writer Richard Matheson and filmmaker George A. Romero, King not only pays homage to their predecessors in the techno-horror sub-genre of apocalyptic zombie fiction, but also underpins the intertextuality established between his novel and two classics of the sub-genre.

Matheson's novel, *I Am Legend* (1955), revolves around Robert Neville as the sole survivor in an apocalyptic society populated by vampires as a result of a military-engineered virus. Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) blames the return to life of corpses on radiation from a space probe. In *Cell*, King draws on classic 19th century techno-horror narratives that explored social anxieties about scientific advances, but also contemporary literary and audiovisual textualities of apocalypses and dystopias resulting from the underlying dangers of technology. Although King's novel is rooted in the classic predecessors of techno-horror, it also updates the genre and offers a new perspective, for although the victims suffering the effects of this technological plague act like zombies, they are not actually dead, but undergo a process of total depersonalization, becoming angry, radical doubles of themselves, argues Miquel-Baldellou.

Figure 2: *Night of the Living Dead* (Romero, 1968).

In the following chapter, *The marvellous, the uncanny, and the fantastic in the cinema of Hayao Miyazaki*, Raúl Fortes-Guerrero explores the concept of the marvellous in the production of the Japanese filmmaker –taking as an example some of his most emblematic films, such as *My Neighbour Totoro* (1988)– and, through the analysis of his relationship with the fairy tale and the fable, tries to elucidate whether his films fall into the genre of the

purely marvellous, into the slippery genre of the fantastic, or into the genre of allegory, in the case of considering that the function of the supernatural is not to intervene in the evolution of the story, but to try to illustrate more clearly an idea expressed in a symbolic key. Considered by many as «the god of anime», the truth is that Hayao Miyazaki is not only a crucial figure in the history of Japanese animated cartoons; his unique production today occupies the privileged place it deserves on its own merit within world animation as well. In fact, he possesses a unique language and visual style, an easily recognizable iconography and a very personal poetics, and is one of the undisputed geniuses of the seventh art, whose works are on a par with the best live-action films, says Fortes-Guerrero.

On the other hand, as in fairy tales, supernatural events do not provoke any surprise in Miyazaki's films either. They are events that, says Fortes-Guerrero, are accepted as normal, in a similar way to what happens in Spanish-American magical realism. And this is because what we call «marvellous» has in Miyazaki –and in Japanese culture in general– the same true entity as what we call reality, constituting the other side of the coin, the unknown half of our world. The marvellous story, therefore, is merely the necessary means for its exploration. This idea, according to which the marvellous, in addition to forming the plot of the work, constitutes a means of access to a part of reality that would otherwise be forbidden to us, connects with the thesis that madness and imagination are rather elevated states of consciousness; and it is related to the Eastern conception of dream and reality, whose limits are blurred, something that ultimately takes us back to Buddhism, according to which everything is emptiness.

Figure 3: *My Neighbour Totoro* (Miyazaki, 1988).

Next, in the chapter *Monsters in the classroom: Essay about fantastical creatures in Art teaching and their connection to the digital era*, Inês Garcia points out that, throughout time, monsters have always attracted our attention, because they reflect and symbolize us as a society, accompanying us in our historical, artistic, political, social and scientific evolution, and representing, as such, an important educational tool due to their richness and allegorical versatility. Garcia observes that a study of monsters is never just about monsters: in fact, they provide a very effective vehicle for learning cultural analysis and also for receiving and analyzing the critical imagination, establishing interdisciplinary connections between different subjects and encouraging students to think and construct new methods for processing anxieties and understanding reality. Monsters contain within themselves a profound manifestation of the freedom of creativity, as well as diverse representations in the realms of the fantastic and unexpected, which are responsible for a growing wave of interest and passion among a wide audience of different age groups. They have, in this sense, the capacity to captivate new generations with their metaphorical and empathic power, capable of establishing deep relationships of interest, love and admiration. It is natural that, when faced with themes that relate fantastic creatures to content to be taught

in the classroom, students tend to show surprise, followed by interest and motivation. Subjects such as these are easily relatable and allow for interconnection between the usual school subjects, and the field of arts education is no exception. In the case of drawing, Garcia continues, we must maintain an important link between the more academic tradition, but also with its newer applications such as video games and its other creative counterparts linked to new digital approaches (such as digital painting or 3D modelling). From all this, Garcia describes and presents two main themes: his teaching experience using the theme of the fantastic linked to the digital world, and the positive implications of these subjects as motivational and creative tools to enhance the passion and interest of students.

For his part, in the following text, Mikel Peña Sarrionandia analyses Yorgos Lanthimos' use of the fantastic resource to promote social debate. Mainly by studying the work of the Greek filmmaker from a sociological perspective, with the aim of contributing new value to the use that the fantasy genre can have, as well as better understanding the work and the success of the director among the different circuits and audiences. Under these premises, in his chapter entitled *Fantasy to talk about reality: Yorgos Lanthimos' cinema*, Peña Sarrionandia observes that, on occasions, it is difficult to talk directly about certain social aspects without the necessary objectivity to deal with them, and that, as the filmmaker himself does with his cinema, a certain distance is necessary to be able to understand «the magnitude of the forest». Lanthimos therefore uses hyperbole, dystopian elements, fantastic resources and other distancing elements to reflect on today's society. This chapter therefore emphasizes the filmmaker's use of such elements of detachment (and fantasy) to show parts of reality that would otherwise be difficult to address. Peña Sarrionandia points out that a clear example of this strategy is found in *The Lobster* (Lanthimos, 2015). This film depicts a society in which being single is forbidden. People without a partner are taken to a hotel where they have 45 days to pair up. If they are still single after that time, they are turned into an animal. David, the protagonist of the film, decides that if he doesn't find a partner, he wants to be turned into a lobster. Under this crazy premise, Lanthimos poses a reflection on love and relationships in today's society. In this case, the filmmaker relies on the

resource of dystopia to highlight and criticise aspects of today's society by inventing a future society.

Next, in the chapter *Medieval and renaissance literature as the basis of the fantastic in Donde los árboles cantan (Laura Gallego)*, Alberto Rodríguez Gómez considers that, despite the fact that the fantastic narrative has never been a great success in Spain, in recent decades we have witnessed a growing popularity of this genre, which has led to the emergence and consolidation of several authors within the country, especially oriented towards a young audience. Among the characteristics of this literature, the medieval setting and the use of motifs, themes and forms present in the history of literature stand out. In Spain, one of the most prolific writers in this field is Laura Gallego, who achieved her definitive consecration with the *Memorias de Idhún* trilogy. Of her extensive work, Rodríguez Gómez focuses on *Donde los árboles cantan* (2011), a novel that won the National Prize for Children's and Young People's Literature in 2012. The plot arose from the author's own doctoral thesis, an analysis and critical edition of the Spanish book of chivalry *Belianís de Grecia*, by Jerónimo Fernández. Using this work as a starting point, the author recreates a book of chivalry in itself, with its corresponding fantastic component, which is based on numerous medieval and renaissance literary elements, especially those belonging to the chivalric genre. Therefore, in this chapter, Rodríguez Gómez studies the main fantastic elements existing in *Donde los árboles cantan* and their relationship with the literary tradition, both Hispanic and international, thus showing how Laura Gallego has masterfully reinterpreted and adapted them to the young audience of the 21st century.

Entering the final stretch of *Visions from the Unexpected*, Elisa Martínez, then, approaches the figure of Lotte Reiniger in her chapter *The Cardboard Fairy Tales of Lotte Reiniger*. As Martínez points out, Reiniger was the first woman to direct the first animated feature film, *Die Abenteuer des Prinzen Achmed* (1926). It is a work of enormous ambition, which achieves an admirable expressiveness in the animated silhouettes depicting a whole series of fantastic creatures.

Figure 4: *Die Abenteuer des Prinzen Achmed* (Reiniger, 1926).

Reiniger's career also provided an opportunity for other women to work in this field (Helena Smith Dayton, Mary Ellen Bute, Evelyn Lambart, Claire Parker, etc.), producing the stories they wanted to tell, directing their own projects and developing the personality of their visual languages. To create his work, Reiniger combined two seemingly very simple elements, but together they offered an artistic career spanning six decades: silhouettes cut out of black cardboard and fairy tales. Silhouette cutting, Martinez notes, has a long tradition in Europe, and Reiniger had been practicing the craft since she was a child to the delight of her family and friends. In addition to crafts, her other childhood passion was fairy tales, the traditional folklore of her native Germany. In fact, the artist had no desire to work with other techniques or to evolve aesthetically, possibly because she did not want to abandon the child she had been, and so she continued to put her childhood hobbies into practice, making them the driving force behind her film work.

Finally, in the chapter *Digital advances in animation, from traditional to digital animation*, María Amor Díaz García analyses how the fantasy genre has been closely linked to animation. The change and development from traditional animation to digital animation has led to a different way of making these films, but never forgetting that what underpins digital animation are the foundations of traditional animation. During the

1990s, Díaz García points out, the entire animation work system, which until then had been carried out manually, began to be digitized. The big studios began to incorporate into their departments the computers and software necessary to carry out what, until then, had always been done in the traditional way. This paradigm shift implied a radical change in the process of making both animated series and films, the impact of which was enormous and traditional animators had to begin to understand and change their habits when it came to making animation. In this context, jobs began to appear where the profile of the digital animator, on many occasions, lacked the experience of the traditional animator, creating a need to train traditional animators who, in many cases, rejected digital tools. In his chapter, Díaz García analyses these aspects and looks at different fantastic genre films, such as *The Beauty and The Beast* (1991), proving that digital advances have meant a change both in business, with the creation of animation studios dedicated exclusively to digital development, and in art, with a total change in the way animated films are made and, therefore, in the development of the fantastic genre, among other aspects.

New proposals to break into the unexpected

The seven chapters presented allow us, as we pointed out, to look into the gap of the unexpected opened up between the multiple genres, media and techniques of the fantastic. A space of evocation and creation, equally inspiring for research and dissemination, as the chapters presented here demonstrate. With literature, cinema, animation, and all the arts presented, in a continuous dialogue ready to break with what users expect of the genre itself, as well as to stimulate its evolution towards new hybridizations and fractures.

What will be the evolution of this fantastic crack which, as we pointed out at the beginning, also affects temporality and the possible ramifications of our future? What will be the next rupture where the unexpected is perceived as such, with all its power, before an increasingly demanding audience? Everything points to the fact that the very evolution of the creative –and creator– facet of the human being is in a continuous dialogue with the desire to surprise others, either by provoking an effect of estrangement, a profound repulsion, a utopian

mental *locus amoenus*, etc., directly linking up with the main aspect we pointed out at the beginning of this chapter. In this sense, that which we had not foreseen would have to be increasingly transgressive, as the unexpected of the present will have ceased to be unexpected in the future.

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«THEIR FIRST IMPULSE IS TO REACH FOR THEIR CELL PHONES»: STEPHEN KING REVISITING AND UPDATING TECHNO-HORROR FICTION IN CELL

Marta Miquel-Baldellou

Introduction

One of the reasons which accounts for the popularity and unrelenting success of the contemporary American master of horror fiction, Stephen King, lies in his ability to resort to the fundamental motifs of the Gothic tradition and adapt them to address the fears and concerns afflicting society in current times. In addition to having written some of the most successful horror novels in the past few decades, King has also reflected in depth on the narratological intricacies characterising the horror genre, arguing that horror fiction is inherently allegorical. As the author from Maine admits in his volume on horror fiction *Danse Macabre*, «we make up horrors to help us cope with the real ones» (King, 2000, p. 27) and «horror appeals to us because it says, in a symbolic way, things we would be afraid to say right out straight» (King, 2000, p. 47). King identifies that horror often expresses itself in two areas, ranging from social concerns, which distress us at a larger scale, to personal fears disturbing the individual. As Gary Hoppenstand and Ray Browne (1987, p. 8) point out, at a global level, King's fiction often establishes that the American dream can easily turn into a nightmare if devoid of principles and measure, thus exploring worldwide concerns about politics, economic crises, environmental disasters and, as this paper will

attempt to show, the pervasive presence of the media and information technologies in our everyday lives. At a more personal level, in his fiction, King (2000, p. 156) also explores what he terms as individual phobias or «phobic pressure points», which may differ according to each person, but are nevertheless shared by a wide spectrum of people, such as the fear of the dark, death or even the paranoid dread of others.

Although King's fiction deals with anxieties related to modern life owing to the potential horror existing in everyday situations, theorists like Anthony Magistrale (2002, p. 100) argue that King's horror is also deeply rooted in the nineteenth-century classic tradition of American Gothic. As Magistrale (2002, p. 105) further claims, King shares common features pertaining to the nineteenth-century American romance tradition, which are evoked in most of his horror novels, such as the portrayal of the local landscape as a Gothic backdrop, the symbolism of the journey motif, and the discovery of evil. All these motifs pervade King's techno-horror novel *Cell* (2006), which depicts the devastation of the city of Boston by a zombie-like invasion when every cell phone user turns into a cannibalistic slayer as a result of an abnormal signal sent over the global cell phone network. King's novel establishes intertextual connections with classics of the zombie subgenre and techno-horror fiction, but also contributes to updating the genre, as it incorporates new concerns about technologies that are suggestive of current times and introduces innovative features in relation to the archetype of the zombie. By means of examining King's novel in comparison with trends regarding technophobic narratives, its characterisation of the zombie archetype, and its acknowledged influence of classics of the genre, this article aims to identify intertextual links between King's *Cell* and classic exponentsof techno-horror and the zombie subgenre in order todetermineKing's contribution to their evolution and renewal.

Techno-horror fiction: contemporary technophobic fears

In King's *Cell*, when artist Clay Riddell moves to Boston to sign a contract and sell his graphic novel, the pulse takes effect, causing

every cell phone user to turn into a zombie-like creature. The only individuals who are saved from the effects of the pulse are those who are not using their phones, such as Clay –as he does not even own a cell phone–, Tom McCourt –who has left his broken phone at home–, and young Alice Maxwell –who has witnessed her mother's ludicrous transformation into a slayer as she was making a phone call–. Most of the population gradually fall prey to the effects of the pulse, since, when experiencing this global emergency, as Tom points out, «their first impulse is to reach for their cell phones» (King, 2011, p. 63), until it becomes obvious that the cause of this global catastrophe is directly related to the compulsive use of the phone, since, as Alice says, «it was the cell phones–they made people crazy» (King, 2011, p. 93). The world population is thus divided into two factions known as «the phoners» or even «phone-crazies» who have become violent and zombie-like, and «the normies», who have not been exposed to the influence of the pulse. At an allegorical level, the pulse brings to the fore the frenzied process of alienation and dehumanisation to which the world population is subjected as a result of their maniac addiction to cell phones, gadgets, applications, and social networks, which literally turn them into zombie-like creatures. After the pulse has taken place, Clay is permanently haunted by the thought that hisson Johnny might have been using his cell phone, as he concedes that «little Johnny-Gee, who wasn't so little anymore» had wanted «a red cell phone» (King, 2011, p. 51) for his last birthday. King's novel *Cell* thus discusses the destructive role that new technologies may acquire in a globalised world and their obnoxious effects on its population.

King has often tackled the dangers of scientific advance in his fiction, even at an early stage of creativity. As Jonathan Davis (1994, p. 71) contends, by means of presenting the dangerous implications of living in a highly-technologized society that remains unaware of its potential hazards, King's techno-horror fiction re-enacts Victor Frankenstein's alarming excitement about the idea of reanimating dead bodies without first considering the consequences of giving in to what seems to be a much coveted scientific breakthrough. King brings to the fore that, owing to a lack of perspective, individuals may grow so dependent on high-tech devices that digital technology may gradually

turn its back to humankind and rise in retaliation to reclaim its due. In a 1985 interview, King already referred to his own technophobia, admitting that he felt «haunted by the idea of gadgets» and that «our technology ha[d] outraced our morality» to the extent that he believed «it [would] kill us in the next twenty years» (qtd. in Magistrale, 2006, p. 27), thus foretelling a rather gloomy future.

Even though each of King's novels exploring technophobia revolves around different techno-phobic fears, they often share some common narratological elements. As a result of an increasingly moral void in society, technology gains in strength in an environment in which individuals feel alienated, contributing further to their ultimate estrangement and dehumanisation. As Magistrale (2006, pp. 30-31) identifies, in King's techno-horror fiction, the government and bureaucratic organizations often show no qualms in their boundless quest for procuring scientific and technological advances, even if their unlimited ambition involves jeopardising the private lives of their citizens. Conversely, the main characters in King's techno-horror narratives are often helpless individuals who feel detached from socially-exalted technological gadgets and, owing to the fact that they live on the margins as symbolic social outcasts, they offer a different alternative viewpoint from that of organisations and citizens subjected to global interests. As technocracy paradoxically seems to ensure the relapse of civilisation into a primitive age, and humankind heads toward annihilation in a post-apocalyptic scenario, in many of King's techno-horror novels, there is still room for hope as individuals pull together to give rise to a brand new society based on human rather than on technocratic values.

King's classic techno-horror novels exemplify most of these narratological tenets, such as governmental negligence, the effects of unrestrained scientific advances, the collapse of civilisation, and the hope for a bright new start as small communities reassemble and learn to coexist in spite of strains and disagreements. In *The Stand* (1978), an escaped influenza virus, which is being researched by the government for germ warfare, causes a worldwide pandemic. King's novel *Pet Sematary* (1983) updates the Frankenstein myth, as Louis Creed faces the dilemma of interceding in his late young son's resurrection after

beingkilled in a tragic accident. In *Christine* (1983), King already warns about indulging in insane obsessions with machines, as Arnie succumbs to a romantic attachment to his car which acquires a life of its own. Following these precedents, King's novel *Cell* (2006) brings to the fore the overwhelming power of the new technologies in a globalised world and, in particular, the use of «cell phones, which have become the dominant form of communication in our daily lives» (King, 2011, p. 116), and have metaphorically turned humankind into zombie-like crowds. Besides, as suggestive of current times, *Cell* evokes the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in New York, since, one of the main characters, Tom, mentions that «this is no different from the bioterrorism the government was so afraid of after nine-eleven» (King, 2011, p. 116), while, in its initial scene, Tod Williams' 2016 film adaptation of King's novel locates the beginning of the pulse, which transforms the population into zombie-like creatures, in an airport.

Cyberpunk: technology meets Gothic

King's novel *Cell* addresses concerns about the overwhelming influence of new technologies, particularly, cell phones, in contemporary society, blending narratological components of Gothic and science fiction with the genre of Cyberpunk. When Clay, Tom and Alice arrive at Gaiten Academy in search for survivors, they meet Jordan, a pupil who expresses his deep interest in «computers and cybernetics» and his fondness for «cyberpunk science fiction» and writers such as «William Gibson, Bruce Sterling, John Shirley» (King, 2011, p. 220). The connection between horror and technology finds its culmination in the Cyberpunk genre, in which, as Fred Botting (2008, p. 185) explains, Gothic archetypes such as ghosts, demons, monsters and zombies are the result of technological effects. Cyberpunk novels portray dystopian urban environments and advanced digital technologies which reinforce Gothic themes. One of the most representative Cyberpunk writers, William Gibson, envisions cyberspace by means of Gothic tropes and, as Tatiani Rapatzikou (2004, p. 192) argues, the virtual architectures, labyrinthine spaces and convoluted structures found in Cyberpunk are deemed as inherently Gothic. Being an emblematic exponent of

the genre, William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984) already warned about networked and phone-dependent generations.

In King's novel, as an avid reader of Cyberpunk, Jordan's literary knowledge aids in gaining insight into how «phoners' may have been infected. As Jordan explains, «phoners» have «a brain like a big old hard drive» (King, 2011, p. 215), and the pulse rendered «brains all wiped clean at the same time, the way you could wipe an old-fashioned computer disc with a powerful magnet» (King, 2011, p. 216). Like computers and cell phones, «phoners» need to recharge their batteries, as they often appear to be in a trance, while they remain connected with one another insofar as they are telepathic and keep on transmitting information to each other. As if they were computer search engines, «phoners» are also capable of reading people's minds, they move in flocks like computerised birds, and all together form a kind of hive whose leader is described as a raggedy man in a red hoodie, who is often referred to as the President of Harvard, in what appears to be a veiled reference to the creator of a worlwide-known social network. As «normies» pull together to fight against «phoners», they become aware that «phoners» are evolving as the signal mutates, and the most recently infected «phoners» look more passive and alienated. This change in their conduct leads Jordan to proclaim that exposing «phoners» to the effects of the pulse once again may contribute to wiping their new software, thus allowing the former programming to reboot. In fact, when Clay meets his son Johnny, who has recently turned into a «phoner», as a father, Clay decides to expose his son to the effects of a cell phone with the hope that his brain will reboot and its former software will be reinstalled.

Zombies: a contemporary techno-horror archetype of classic heritage

In *Cell*, the so-called «phone-crazies» present most of the iconic features characterising the traditional zombie, as they are violent, cannibalistic, unintelligent, rudimentary, and they move in flocks, even if their infamous existence responds to the failure of the global cell phone network in King's novel. As an archetype arising from postmodern horror fiction, the zombie amalgamates elements from

other archetypes of the classic Gothic tradition, which can be identified with what King (2000, p. 66) considers as «an almost perfect Tarot hand», comprising «the Vampire, the Werewolf, and the Thing without a Name», as the zombie broadly mingles narratological features pertaining to the vampire, the double, and the monster.

Like Frankenstein's creature, who is given birth as a result of its creator's Promethean ambitions, zombies also rise to life as a result of scientific aberration, but, if Frankenstein's monster triggers our sympathy as a disaffected victim of the Industrial Revolution who ponders about his own condition, zombies are bereft of self-awareness and individuality, as they resemble homogenised masses of workers exiting from high-tech companies and acting as clogs in a manufactured conglomerate machinery. As Clay observes, after the pulse has taken effect, «there was no mistaking the vacant faces, the eyes that seemed to look beyond everything, the dirty, bloody, dishevelled clothing», while «some moaned, some made vocal noises that might once have been words» (Clay, 2011, p. 130), conjuring up a portrait which closely matches the image of zombies mostly popularised in films.

In analogy with the vampire, who parasitically subsists on human blood, zombies also nourish on human flesh, but, instead of being portrayed as seductive aristocrats mostly acting on their own, zombies are rather deprived of any enticing appearance, since, as decomposing corpses, they literally personify the abject and hardly ever move alone, but in throngs. King (2011, p. 97) has identified the evolution of vampire fiction, stating that «the symbolic act of blood-drinking has been replaced by the act of cannibalism itself». Since the zombie archetype finds its roots in the figure of the vampire, in *Cell*, King includes subtle references to this nineteenth-century classic archetype in his depiction of «phoners», but also subverts some of its conventional traits, since it is stated that, unlike vampires, «the crazies don't go out after dark» (King, 2011, p. 172), thus ironically obliging «normies» to lead a vampiric existence instead and take action only at night.

In relation to the figure of the double, zombies are stirredback to life, whilethey mostly retain their former appearance, but lack will and self-control. In King's novel, «phoners» also display some features that bear resemblance with the nineteenth-century Gothic archetype

of the double, insofar as, owing to the process of estrangement and dehumanisation that they have endured, these creatures are zombie-like and look totally abstracted from themselves to the extent that, as Clay (2011, p. 60) observes, «even calling them people might be wrong». Nonetheless, this shift does not respond to the individual's need to release repressed instincts, as is the case with the double, but it is rather the outcome of living in an alienating society which threatens individual identity.

Zombies thus share features with other archetypes of the Gothic tradition, but, as Botting (2016, p. 751) claims, they present traits which endow them with some uniqueness, mostly as a result of the social and cultural context which fashioned them as creatures deprived of volition, with the sole purpose of satiating their basic needs and feeding themselves, in a dystopian world suffused with scientific transgression,insatiable consumerism, social alienation, and the dominion of the media and new technologies. Following the precedent established by Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), which is considered the first techno-horror novel, the immediate literary precedents featuring the zombie can be found in narratives such as W.W. Jacobs' *The Monkey's Paw* (1902), in which a late young man rises back to life as a walking corpse, and H.P. Lovecraft's *Reanimator* series (1922), in which a scientist indulges in devious experiments with corpses until his victims come back to life to take revenge. One of the most distinguishing features of the zombie, though, which is that of sustaining their infamous existence by means of feeding on human flesh, is precisely introduced in a classic novel within the vampire genre, insofar as, in Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976), there are some less developed specimens of vampires described as walking corpses that feed on human flesh.

As Botting (2016, p. 751) argues, although zombies first appeared in literature, they are inherently regarded as cinematic creatures, since they mostly acquired popularity in films, giving rise to a filmic horror subgenre of their own. Victor Halperin's *White Zombie* (1932) is considered the first film featuring a zombie, as it explores the actual origins of the archetype rooted in African folklore –as the zombie was literally envisioned as a ghost dispossessed of volition through

voodoo rituals–, while it also explores the dehumanisation of workers through expressionist features that recall Jacques Tourneur's *I Walked with a Zombie* (1943). Following these precedents, King's *Cell* is mostly influenced by classic films pertaining to the zombie subgenre and, in particular, George A. Romero's iconic films which established the fundaments which would influence subsequent representations of the zombie.

Acknowledging the masters: George A. Romero and Richard Matheson

King dedicated his novel *Cell* to both Richard Matheson, author of *I Am Legend* (1954), which is considered the first modern vampire novel that paved the way for the establishment of the zombie subgenre, and George A. Romero, director of *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), which has been heralded as the film which laid the basis and introduced the iconic features that would characterise zombie fiction from then on. According to Magistrale (2002, p. 98), King's novels translate so well into films because they already display outstanding cinematic procedures, and his use of cinematic techniques and intertextual references to films in his novels corroborate King's expertise about the evolution of the techno-horror genre in cinema. King's *Cell* contains both explicit and veiled references to Romero's iconic film, which inaugurated the zombie subgenre as we know it today, as well as to its first sequel *Dawn of the Dead* (1978).

Romero's first film of the saga established the basic narratological elements that would recur in subsequent zombie films, as it portrays a small group of survivors who must fight against a mass of undead corpses in search of human bodies to satiate their hunger. Early on in King's novel, immediately after the pulse has taken effect, Clay talks to a police officer who explicitly declares that this situation reminds him of Romero's film *Night of the Living Dead*, while, later on, as Clay, Tom and Alice take shelter in Tom's house, Clay's consideration that «if any of them looks over here, sees us and decides to come after us, we're done [...] not even if we barricade ourselves in the cellar» (King, 2011, p. 131) bears close resemblance with the situation depicted in Romero's film,

as survivors consider concealing themselves in the cellar as the most plausible way to remain alive. Some disturbing turning points in King's novel are also subtle references to Romero's first film inaugurating his zombie saga. Alice's strenuous fight with her mother, who intends to kill her daughter as a result of being under the influence of the pulse evokes the scene in Romero's film in which Helen Cooper's zombie daughter slays her own mother. When young Alice is killed by one of the «normies», in addition to reinforcing the idea that «normies» are also capable of dreadful actions, this passage also establishes a connection with Romero's original film since, Ben, who is the only survivor left, is finally slain by a gang of hunters. Besides, in King's novel, when Clay meets his ex-wife Sharon, he realises that she has turned into a «phoner», in resemblance with Barbara's brother, Johnny, in Romero's film, as Johnny returns transformed into a zombie in the final scenes of the film to assault his own sister.

This concatenation of intertextualities is further exposed when, in spite of her youth, Alice declares having watched Romero's *Dawn of the Dead*, unveiling that she and one of her friends «watched it at a sleepover back in eighth grade» and instructing that «in that movie, all the dead people [...] went back to the mall when they woke up» (King, 2011, p. 145), which helps them follow a course of action to escape, as they assume «phoners» are also assembling in a particular spot. Romero's zombie films extending over the span of forty years, and some of them coinciding with the publication of King's *Cell*, display an apocalyptic outlook which locate the causes of the zombie pandemic in consumerism, as happens in *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), and in global militarisation, as is the case in *Day of the Dead* (1985), which is also reflected in King's novel, as the pulse takes place near a commercial area and the factions of survivors try to get hold of guns and artillery to defend themselves.

According to Jack Ketchum (2009, p. 58), as the creator of the first modern zombie film, George Romero often admitted that he would never have made *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), or any of its sequels, if *I Am Legend* had not been published, thus acknowledging the important influence that Matheson's novel, as a forerunner of the zombie subgenre, exerted on his films. King's *Cell* is also deeply

grounded in Matheson's novel, and also reveals imagery displayed in some of its film adaptations. *I Am Legend* is considered the most influential narrative in the development of zombie literature, although it is also regarded as the first modern vampire novel, featuring Robert Neville, as the sole survivor in a global pandemic who spends his time killing vampires and searching for a cure that may bring the plague to an end. As Mathias Clasen argues, Matheson was responsible for transplanting the vampire «from the otherworldly realms of folklore and Victorian supernaturalism to the test tube of medical inquiry and rational causation» (Clasen, 2010, p. 323). Moreover, Matheson must take the credit for providing a scientific explanation to the vampire myth, while his novel also underpins Neville's awareness of being considered a monster in the eyes of those he has been killing, hence, of being considered «other» from their perspective, thus reflecting Mark Jancovich's interpretation of Matheson's novel, as portraying «the experience of alienation, estrangement, and powerlessness» prevailing in the American society at the time of its publication (Jancovich, 1996, p. 82). The hybridisation of the genre to which Matheson's novel contributed, embracing vampires, scientific explanations, but, particularly, the perspective of the other are further explored in King's *Cell* when the gang of survivors decide to annihilate a large group of «phoners», who were only considered human beings before the pulse took effect. Throughout the novel, there is the disturbing suspicion that Clay and his faction may actually be replicating the violent conduct displayed by the so-called «phone crazies». Besides, as the group of survivors become more violent, «phoners» turn into more passive creatures as the signal causes them to mutate and evolve in their condition. In Matheson's novel, Neville meets Ruth, whobelongs to a more evolved faction of vampires that are neither dead nor violent, thus implying, as Clasen (2010, p. 321) argues, that «vampires are dangerously similar to normal human beings in certain aspects (and vice versa)». Taking up this cue, in *Cell*, Clay finally meets his son Johnny, who has turned into a member of the faction of the evolved «phoners» hence causing Clay to identify with those he had been slaying, and considering that those whom he has regarded as others so far may also be regarded as victims like his own son.

King's *Cell* also incorporates and reverses narratological features introduced in some of the film adaptations based on Matheson's novel. So far Matheson's novel has been adapted to films on three occasions, including Ubaldo Ragona and Sidney Salkow's *The Last Man on Earth* (1964) with Vincent Price, Boris Sagal's *The Omega Man* (1971) with Charlton Heston, and Francis Lawrence's *I Am Legend* (2007) with Will Smith. King's novel presents a series of narratological aspects which evince the influence of Boris Sagal's adaptation of Matheson's novel, especially in relation to Neville's being cast as a scientist and how aging affects the way individuals are diversely exposed to the plague. In *The Omega Man*, mutants are techno-phobic and wish to slay Neville because they believe he personifies scientific advancement, whereas, in King's *Cell*, it is rather the fondest users of new technologies who are more easily transformed into zombie-like creatures. Moreover, if Neville, as an embodiment of scientific progress, is left alone in front of a techno-phobic mass in Sagal's film adaptation of Matheson's novel, in King's *Cell*, the survivors, who are mainly the least active users of new technologies, must fight a crowd who are addictively chained to their cell phones. Besides, in Sagal's film, it is hinted that a faction of survivors have not been infected by the plague because their youth has helped them develop some sort of immunity. King's novel also appears to take this hint in order to revert it in *Cell*, since, it is implied that those who have not been fallen prey to the pulse are mainly young children and elderly people, as they are considered to be the least active users of cell phones among the population, even though they also become passive victims of the plague.

Currents trends in the genre: tradition and innovation

Zombies have increasingly acquired a central role in recent fictions to depict contemporary concerns in a post-human world, such as biotechnological experimentation, ecological catastrophes, global terrorism, and the aftermath of the electronic revolution. The presence of zombies has blurred the boundaries across different literary and audiovisual genres, ranging from comics, graphic novels and music videoclips to films, videogames, and television series on streaming

platforms.As a case in point, the Japanese video game series *Resident Evil* (1996), portraying a zombie pandemic in a research genetic facility, has developed into a fruitful franchise with comic books and blockbusters, such as the *Resident Evil* film series that has fruitfully produced six films up to now. Significantly, the main character in King's novel, Clay, is a graphic novel artist and, in Tod Williams' film adaptation, it is asserted that the leader of the «phoners» resembles one of the characters in Clay's graphic novel, as if Clay's artistic nightmares had come true. With the renewed popularity of television series and the advent of streaming platforms, the television series *The Walking Dead* (2010), and its more recent spinoffs –based on the comic book series created in 2003 by Robert Kirkman, Tony Moore and Charlie Adlard– has rendered the zombie subgenre largely mainstream, accentuating the struggle of different factions of survivors to stay alive under constant threats in a devastated landscape. King's *Cell* also presents a technophobic scenario, the hectic pace of high-technologies as displayed in the fast movements of zombies, and the devastated landscape in a post-apocalyptic world.

In recent years, fiction about zombies has been proliferating exponentially, establishing the zombie as an iconic postmodern Gothic archetype, which has paved the way for its continuous evolution and transformation. As happened with vampires and their evolving characterisation in the last decades, the zombie archetype is gradually being perceived in a more positive light. As a case in point, John Ajvide Lindquist's novel *Handling the Undead* (2005) offers an innovative approach, as zombies are presented as pitiable creatures whose social and legal status remains uncertain. King must also be given the credit for updating the zombie tradition, since, as a police officer concedes early in *Cell*, «these people aren't dead» (King, 2011, p. 31). Hence, even if those who suffer the effects of this technological plague act like zombies and are characterised as such, King's disturbing reversal of the myth is that these «zombies» are not actually dead. King's notion of the zombie archetype thus goes back to its roots, in folklore voodoo rituals whereby individuals were deprived of their will, while incorporating the deeply disturbing implication that, even though the cannibalistic creatures populating his novel retain the iconic aesthetic features of zombies, they are, in truth, only zombie-like.

Conclusions

King's *Cell* blends tenets representative of techno-horror and the zombie subgenre with innovative and even postmodern characteristics as indicative of current times. King explicitly acknowledges the classic novels and films of the genre, paying them tribute and also resorting to them as a narratological basis for his novel. In addition, though, by tracing the origins of the zombie-like invasion in the overwhelming presence of cell phones and networks, and also by making explicit reference to the terrorist attacks in New York, which still remained freshly vivid when the novel was published, King contributes to reflecting the spirit of the times and incorporating contemporary anxieties in the genre. King's most outstanding contribution to the zombie subgenre is to assert that «phoners» are not actually dead, which stresses disturbing ethical issues in relation to their eradication on behalf of factions of survivors.

King's novel thus introduces the highly disturbing discourse, only hinted in previous contributions to the zombie subgenre, that the zombie-like creature, especially in its most venial version, is not different from us. Clay's dilemma whether he should use the cell phone, perceived as a weapon, on his own son to reboot his software and turn him to his former «normal» condition underscores ethical issues and also typifies the cell phone, which has been perceived as a weapon, as a cure in itself. By means of an ending with Asimovian echoes, readers are left to guess whether Johnny may revert back to his former self or rather remain in his present alienated condition, thus eventually endowing the zombie subgenre with some deeply disturbing and reflective content.

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THE MARVELLOUS, THE UNCANNY, AND THE FANTASTIC IN THE CINEMA OF HAYAO MIYAZAKI

Raúl Fortes-Guerrero

Introduction: The relationship with literature and philosophy

Hayao Miyazaki is not only a crucial figure in Japanese anime history; today his singular production occupies the privileged place it rightfully deserves in world animation. Moreover, in possessing a unique language and visual style, an easily recognizable iconography and a highly personal poetic discourse, Miyazaki is one of the undeniable geniuses of the seventh art; his standing is commensurate with any of the great filmmakers who have worked with real, flesh-and-bone actors. The differentiation is based on the medium chosen to carry out their works. In the spirit of the best live-action films, Miyazaki's anime renditions are equally considered to be rich, beautiful, deep and surprising. The depth and breadth of the themes he explores and the complexity of his characters –with the exception, perhaps, of those who star in productions for his youngest audiences– is not an obstacle, nonetheless, for his works to be enjoyed by a broad spectator spectrum in which children stand out as the main –although not the only– recipients (Fortes-Guerrero, 2019, p. 58). Miyazaki does not shy away from the fact that, above all, his production is geared towards children; but, unlike what usually happens with animation aimed at this audience group, his concern is not to merely focus on the mere entertainment of youngsters, and even less to be an advocate for their moral indoctrination with subliminal messages in the style of Walt

Disney.[1] Miyazaki's stance implies the innate intelligence and wisdom of the child's expanding mind, and his works should be considered as artistic stimulants for the development of that innate potential. Miyazaki's works can be understood as secret keys that open the door to the adult universe; children are guided in the search for their own identity and they are helped in the difficult task of taking up responsibilities and learning to relate to the world, an aspect especially relevant in Japan, where from a tender age, a sense of duty is deeply instilled. They play a similar role as fairy tales in literature, with which they share the acceptance of the supernatural as an integral component of everyday life (Fortes-Guerrero, 2019, pp. 58-60). This is the characteristic that defines the marvellous, and, more specifically, the «pure marvellous», using Tzvetan Todorov's term in his *Introduction à la littérature fantastique* (*The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*). In this work, with regard to the genre of the marvellous, he stresses that

> the supernatural elements do not provoke any particular reaction neither implicitly in the characters, nor in the reader. The characteristic of the marvellous is not an attitude
>
> towards the events of which account is given, but rather the very nature of those events.
>
> (Todorov, 1972, p. 68, own translation).

As in fairy-tales –a variety, according to Todorov, of the marvellous–, neither in Miyazaki's films do supernatural events stir up any surprise. These are facts simply accepted as normal, in a similar way to what happens in Spanish-American *magical realism*. Gabriel García Márquez, probably the greatest exponent of this literary movement, thus formulates his conception of the relationship between the marvellous

[1] For the Japanese director, the cinema must have a cathartic function that kindles and elevates our spirits and makes us leave the screening room «purified»:

> I believe that popular works, even if frivolous, must be sincere. [...] We must not indulge in vileness, accentuate it or expand it. I hate Disney movies because you leave the cinema with the same narrow-mindedness with which you entered it. In my opinion, these films do nothing but scoff at the public. (Miyazaki, in Aoi, 2004, p. 12, own translation).

and the American reality: «I believe that particularly in *Cien años de soledad* [*One Hundred Years of Solitude*], I am a realistic writer, because I believe that in Latin America everything is possible, everything is real. [...] We live surrounded by extraordinary and fantastic things» (García Márquez, in Lukavská, 1991, p. 73, own translation).

Similarly, we cannot reduce Miyazaki's films to mere «marvellous» stories without stressing that what we qualify as such, in the Japanese culture is part, to some extent, of the most absolute exponent of daily life. This normalization of the supernatural –or, at least, of some of its elements– must therefore be taken into account when dealing with the classification of works such as films by the Japanese director, accepting that they are far from our sociocultural parameters and, consequently, far from our conception of what surrounds us.

Following from this, fantasy would have the same true entity as what we call reality, and would constitute the other side of the coin, that unknown half of our world. The marvellous story would then be the necessary means for its exploration. Pierre Mabille put it quite aptly in *Le miroir du merveilleux* (*Mirror of the Marvelous: The Surrealist Reimagining of Myth*):

> Beyond entertainment, curiosity, and all the emotions that stories, tales, legends give us; beyond the need to be distracted, to forget, to seek pleasant and terrifying sensations, the true purpose of the marvellous trip is –we are now in a position to understand it– the fullest exploration of universal reality. (Mabille, 1962, p. 24, own translation).

This idea, according to which the marvellous, in addition to forming the plot of the work, constitutes a route to a part of reality that, otherwise, would be forbidden to us –a secret reality, hidden behind daily life–, connects with the thesis that madness, dreams, and imagination are nothing more than elevated states of consciousness. As Edgar Allan Poe reminds us at the beginning of his short story *Eleonora*, «science has not yet taught us whether or not madness is the sublime of intelligence» (Poe, 1966, p. 95, own translation). Gérard de Nerval –in whose mind «earthly events could coincide with those

of the supernatural world» (Nerval, 2011, p. 93, own translation), and for whom «[t]he dream is a second life» (Nerval, 2011, p. 27, own translation) and existence is a «shedding of the dream in real life» (Nerval, 2011, p. 40, own translation)– also puts in the mouth of the narrator of *Aurélia ou le rêve et la vie* (*Aurélia*) these significant phrases: «I consider that the human imagination cannot invent anything that is not true, either in this world or in others» (Nerval, 2011, pp. 93-94, own translation) and «[w]ith my idea of the dream as a means of communication between humankind and the spirit world, I expected…» (Nerval, 2011, p. 127, own translation). For his part, the great master of Czech animation Jan Švankmajer proclaims in *Přežít svůj život* (*Surviving Life*) that «dreams and reality are the two halves that complete existence».

All these statements are intimately related to the oriental conception of dreams and reality, whose limits are extremely blurred –there we have, without needing to go any further, the dream of the Chinese philosopher Chuang-Tzu[2]–, something that ultimately refers us to Buddhism, according to which, and in clear consonance with the *sic transit gloria mundi* of the West, «[t]he whole world is empty, like a huge soap bubble», and «[i]n this great emptiness that is the world, like a dream within another dream, everything is interdependent» (Calle, 2007, p. 93, own translation). It is the same idea condensed in the phrase «this world is a dream» that the character Caproni says in a film that is, *a priori*, so austere and little given to the wastefulness of fantasy: *Kaze tachinu* (*The Wind Rises*), which warns us that even what is presented to us under the unsuspecting appearance of objectivity can be equally misleading. And if this happens in a realistic story and, to some extent, real as is the last Miyazaki production released to date, in which the magic is limited only to the dreams and visions of Jirô Horikoshi, the main character, then what may indeed happen in his most «marvellous» films?

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[2] We offer the version collected by Octavio Paz in his work *Chuang-Tzu*:

> I dreamt that I was a butterfly, fluttering in the garden, flying from branch to branch. I was only aware of my existence as a butterfly and not of my personality as a man. I woke up; and now I don't know if I dreamt of myself as a butterfly or if I am a butterfly dreaming that it is Chuang-Tzu. (Chuang-Tzu, in Paz, 1997, p. 53, own translation).

An analysis of two film examples: *Sen to Chihiro no kamikakushi* (*Spirited Away*) and *Tonari no Totoro* (*My Neighbour Totoro*)

Spirited Away

Spirited Away is a paradigmatic case of that hazy border between reality and dreams. On the way to their new home, the main character and her parents get lost in the forest and arrive at what appears to be an abandoned theme park. Although the girl insists, fearful, on turning back, the couple enter the strange enclosure and discover a street full of empty restaurants with cooked food. While her parents sit down to have a hearty lunch at one of the restaurants, Chihiro, annoyed, goes out to explore the surroundings and approaches a gigantic bathhouse. On the bridge that gives access to the building, she meets Haku, a mysterious boy who urges her to leave the place swiftly. Night falls suddenly and the restaurant area, until then deserted, fills with ghostly thronging shadows. Chihiro frantically runs to her parents only to discover that they have been turned into pigs. Terrified, she tries to go back, but her escape route has been blocked; the vast meadow that the characters had crossed to get there has now become a huge river, on whose waters a steamship loaded with divinities approaches the baths. Chihiro does not believe what is happening and repeats to herself that it must all be a dream. At that moment, she herself begins to fade away.

If we accept that, in the film, Chihiro is a real-life character – insofar as she belongs to the world considered as such–, why, then, does she disappear, as if it were a dream, in that marvellous dimension? What Miyazaki is suggesting, in one way or another, is that fantasy can be as true as the reality that we consider to be true. If Chihiro had finally disappeared, she could never have returned to her world, which is also ours. In order to continue to exist, Chihiro has to accept the dream, however incredible and magical it may be –or, precisely, for that very reason, as happens with Teodoro, the protagonist of *O Mandarim* (*The Mandarin*), by Eça de Queiroz. Failure to embrace acceptance carries the risk of disappearing from the marvellous world, and, consequently, also from the world that we call real, given the

inextricable intertwining of both universes (Fortes-Guerrero, 2019, pp. 65-66), by virtue of which, as in *Aurélia*, «the terrestrial events would be linked to those of the invisible world. In any case, it would be one of those strange interrelationships [...] that are easier to point out than to actually define...» (Nerval, 2011, pp. 105-106, own translation).

Takashi Sasaki argues that Shakespeare himself, in his play *The Tempest*, goes so far as to say, in Prospero's own words, that men are made of the same material as dreams, and therefore we are just as fickle. For the Japanese author, this statement also implicitly indicates that human beings are characterized by having dreams (desires) and are driven by having them realised (Sasaki, 2005, p. 122). But, in order to see those wishes or hopes fulfilled, it is necessary to be awake. And to be awake, in the *universe of fantasy* means not closing your eyes and ignoring it, as Chihiro does in the beginning; rather it means accepting magic and (day)dreams as very real parts of an existence much more complex than the one we see as normal. That acceptance is given, in the film, by a certain act with mythological resonances: the fact that the protagonist eats food belonging to that world, in this case, a berry offered by Haku, something that refers us directly to the Hellenic story of Persephone and Hades –narrated by Ovid in his *Metamorphôsês* (*Metamorphoses*) and by Pseudo-Apollodorus in his *Bibliothêkê* (*Bibliotheca*); but this discourse also finds its Japanese equivalent in the story of the goddess Izanami, imprisoned in Yomi –the land of the dead– for eating food from the underworld –this is an example of how Miyazaki draws from the rich corpus of Japanese legends as well as from other myths, both from the East and from the West (Fortes-Guerrero, 2019, pp. 66-67).

On the other hand, dreams are often the bearer of the knowledge that we earnestly try to unearth during our waking hours, as in the Noh piece *Kantan*, based on the Chinese play *Huáng liáng mèng* (*Yellow Millet Dream*) by Zhìyuǎn Mǎ: In search of enlightenment, the young man Rosei arrives at an inn in the city of Kantan (Hándân, in Chinese). While the waitress prepares food for him, he decides to take a short nap, and he does so on a pillow that is said to have magical properties. Rosei has a dream in which he sees fifty years of his life pass by full of prosperity and joy, but, just at the moment of greatest happiness, the

innkeeper interrupts his nap to announce that the table is served. The young man then understands that life is just an illusion and that the truth he was looking for is none other than the transience of things, as fleeting and unreal as his dream (Fortes-Guerrero, 2019, p. 67).

In a similar fashion, precisely in the supernatural universe of *Spirited Away* –a substitute and, at the same time, a mirror of the world that we call real– is where the protagonist, under a different personality, discovers her abilities –hidden until that moment– and, paradoxically, attains self-discovery. From this perspective, what is marvellous would be nothing more than a superior reasoning. The blurring of the boundaries between reality and fantasy makes *Spirited Away* a filmic paradigm of what the fantasy genre means in literature for Todorov:

> [T]he fantastic is essentially based on the reader's hesitancy –a reader who identifies with the main character– regarding the nature of an uncanny event. This hesitation can be resolved either by admitting that the event belongs to reality, or by deciding that it is the product of imagination or the result of an illusion; in other words, it can be decided whether the event exists or otherwise. (Todorov, 1972, p. 186, own translation).

However, rather than establishing itself as an autonomous genre, the fantastic seems to be situated on the border between two other genres: the uncanny and the marvellous:

> [T]he fantastic does not last longer than that period of hesitancy: it entails a moment of hesitation common to the reader and the character, who must decide whether or not what they perceive comes from «reality», as accepted by everybody. At the end of the story, the reader, if the character has not already done so, nevertheless makes a decision: he or she opts for one or another solution, thus leaving the fantastic. If one decides that the laws of reality remain intact and this facilitates the explanation of the phenomena described, we say that the work belongs to another genre: the uncanny. If, on the contrary, the reader decides that it is necessary to accept new laws of nature by which the phenomenon can be explained, we enter the genre of the marvellous.
> […] Let us note that in each case, a transitory sub-genre arises: between

> the fantastic and the uncanny, on the one hand, and the fantastic and the marvellous, on the other. These sub-genres comprise works that have long sustained fantastic hesitancy, but ultimately end in the marvellous or the uncanny. (Todorov,1972, pp. 53 and 56, own translation).

Hence Todorov speaks of the «fantastic-marvellous» and the «fantastic-uncanny», in the middle of which the «pure-fantastic» would be found.

With the protagonist and her parents getting lost in the forest and their arrival at what seems to be an abandoned theme park in which, however, the restaurants are open and with the food ready and laid out on the tables, Miyazaki's film begins as a story capable of being classified within what Todorov terms the «pure-uncanny»:

> In the works belonging to this genre, events are related that can be perfectly explained by the laws of reason, but that are, in one way or another, incredible, extraordinary, shocking, singular, disturbing, unusual and that, for this reason, they provoke in the character and the reader [or viewer] a reaction similar to that produced in us by texts of the fantastic. (Todorov, 1972, p. 59, own translation).

According to Freud –Todorov says–, the feeling of «the uncanny», «the sinister», «the ominous» –a notion that he himself coined in his 1919 essay *Das Unheimliche*, translatable by any of these terms– would be related to the appearance of an image originating in the childhood of the individual or of the race and linked to more or less ancient taboos. For the Bulgarian-French author, «if we admit that primitive experience is constituted by transgression, it is possible to accept Freud's theory of the origin of the uncanny» (Todorov, 1972, pp. 61-62, own translation).

In *Spirited Away*, the sensation of uncanniness perceived in the presentation of the film is linked not to material events that defy reason, but to the description of the protagonist's reactions –especially those stemmed in fear. When Chihiro ventures into the so-called theme park, she sees nothing but a sinister series of deterrent signs –small stone temples

scattered around the base of a huge camphor tree[3], mysterious two-sided statues in the forest, a wind-blown tunnel, the apparent moan of a building, the empty restaurants with food dishes already set on the tables– which her parents pay no attention to at all. This feeling of uncanniness is connected with the idea of transgression that we mentioned earlier, which, in turn, is linked to a marked religious stance in the film: it explores the violation of a sacred space and the subsequent desecration of a divine offering, as portrayed in the scene where Chihiro's parents devour the food prepared for the local deities and spirits.

However, Miyazaki soon takes the story down the path of the fantastic: it suddenly gets dark, shops and bars fill with ghostly shadows, and parents are turned into pigs. Terrified, Chihiro tries to go back the way she came, but realizes that the way back has been flooded by the torrent of water gushing from a stone statue in the shape of a frog. The girl wonders if her experience is real or just a product of her imagination. When, at last, she is convinced –as indeed the viewer is with her– that she is not dreaming, the fantastic fades to give way to the «pure-marvellous». Chihiro accepts and comes to internalize as normal the laws of the world in which, suddenly, she has ended up, a world inhabited by gods, sorceresses, flying dragons, anthropomorphic frogs, and soot sprites, in which she will run endless adventures trying to recover the identity that was whisked away from her and trying to save her parents.

Nevertheless, Miyazaki's film has a surprise in store for us towards the end, when, after passing a final test, the witch Yubâba allows Chihiro to return with her parents to her world, which is also ours. The girl meets them again and asks if they are fine. The bland response she gets makes her wonder –and, again, the viewer also wonders as she does– if everything that has happened up to that instant has not just been dream. Hesitancy puts us squarely back in the realm of the fantastic.

Miyazaki maintains our doubt until the very conclusion of the story, when the plot goes for the marvellous option: when exiting the

[3] «In Japanese folk tradition, large old trees were revered because they were thought to be, like the *kaju* of the *wayang kulit*, the mediation point through which the gods descended to Earth» (Yamaguchi, 1987, p. 9, own translation). Camphor trees, in addition, due to their large size, their elegant appearance and their longevity, have a sacred status throughout Japan, with many temples in the country having magnificent specimens nearby.

tunnel that gave access to the supposed theme park, the parents discover, astonished, that the car, which has remained motionless in the same place where they left it before entering the passage, is now covered in dust and leaves. The idea that it could have been the object of mischief, a prank, as they themselves point out, does not hold up against the general impression of the environment; the surrounding lush vegetation clearly suggests the passing of seasons, the passage of time. Any hint of doubt that we may still harbour is dispelled when we are shown the image of Chihiro wearing the shiny hair band that, as an amulet, she received from the sorceress Zenîba –Yubâba's twin sister– in the magical world. The protagonist's experiences, therefore, have been real, but they have taken place in a parallel dimension to our known universe (Fortes-Guerrero, 2019, pp. 70-71). The film, then, is framed in the field of the fantastic-marvellous, within the group of stories presented as fantastic and which end with the acceptance of the supernatural.[4] As Todorov affirms, «these stories are the closest to the pure-fantastic, given the very fact of its unexplained, not rationalized nature, which suggests, in effect, the existence of the supernatural» (Todorov, 1972, p. 65, own translation).

The Japanese scholar Hiroshi Aoi points out that the conception of the story based on two clearly differentiated parallel universes –that of everyday life shown at the beginning and end of the film, and that of the depiction of exuberant fantasy, which constitutes the bulk of the work– places *Spirited Away* as a turning point in the artistic production of Miyazaki. Until that film, the Japanese director had presented a one-tracked dimension in which the ordinary and the marvellous converged and intertwined, so that with each manifestation of the supernatural, the miracle happened (Aoi, 2004, pp. 161-162 and 170-172).

My Neighbour Totoro

The abovementioned intertwining is what happens in *My Neighbour Totoro*, a previous work that, precisely because it makes use of that unique dimension in which reality and fantasy mix, is far more ambiguous than *Spirited Away*.

[4] For further information in this regard see Fortes-Guerrero, 2011, pp. 20-29.

This film, too, begins with a move: that of Tatsuo Kusakabe and his daughters May and Satsuki to their new home, a house in the middle of the rural Tokorozawa landscape of the late 1950s. The family decides to relocate due to the mother's admission into a nearby hospital for tuberculosis patients. The surrounding nature is imbued, as is always the case in Miyazaki, with the feeling of the sacred, since divinities are considered to dwell in it. There is a display of related items, such as a small Shinto shrine, a temple dedicated to Inari –the deity of rice, agriculture and fertility, represented by the figure of a fox– and a huge camphor tree; these elements prepare us for the appearance of the supernatural: at a certain point, little May discovers, playing in the garden, some strange beings that, in the film, are called *chû-totoro* (medium-sized *totoro*) and *chibi-totoro* (small *totoro*). As Alice does with the White Rabbit in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, May follows them through a tunnel of bushes, which becomes the gateway to the marvellous world, and reaches the camphor tree, where, like the Lewis Carroll's heroine, falls through a hole to the roots of the tree. There she runs into the *ô-totoro* (large *totoro*), who can be considered either as the spirit of this tree, or the spirit that resides in it. After the initial excitement, May falls asleep peacefully on its huge, hairy belly. However, when her sister and father find her, we see the girl alone and huddled on the ground. She tells them about the encounter with the mysterious being and guides them to the supposed opening through which she slipped into the camphor tree, but there she discovers, to her dismay, that the hole has disappeared.

In a later scene, we see Satsuki carrying May on her back as she waits for her father at the bus stop. The little girl has fallen asleep, and the darkness of the night and the rain, which, in Japanese tradition, are associated with the supernatural, make Satsuki feel restless. These sensations soon disappear with the appearance of the *ô-totoro*. Satsuki lends the spirit an umbrella, and the spirit, in return, hands her a small package before getting on its *catbus* –a cat-shaped bus– and fading away in the distance, behind the hills. The next morning, May and Satsuki open it and discover that it contains a handful of assorted seeds. After planting them, they wait impatiently for them to germinate. At night, from their futons, they catch a glimpse of the three *totoro* performing a kind of fertility

ritual in the garden, and they decide to join them. Suddenly, plants sprout out of the ground and begin to grow vigorously. The stems intertwine to form the sturdy trunk of a gigantic tree on which the *ô-totoro* towers with the other two *totoro* and the girls. A few meters away, in the house, the father, absorbed in his work, does not seem to notice anything going on. In what has become one of the most celebrated scenes in the film –and even in the entire production of its author–, the exultant May and Satsuki share a night flight over the rice fields and forests of Tokorozawa and end up at the very top of the camphor tree playing the ocarina with the three *totoro*. From his study, the father feels the cool gust of wind caused by their landing, and hears, indeed, the sound of the wind instrument. However, the next morning, the huge tree has disappeared, although, in its place, we see small shoots. The ambiguity of the sequence is reflected in the jubilant words of the girls: «It was a dream, but it was not a dream...!».

Towards the end of the film, the protagonists are transported by the *catbus* to the hospital where the mother has been admitted, to whom, without being seen, they leave an ear of corn as a gift on the windowsill of her room. The cob is signed and dispels any doubts about their visit to the place. However, the existence of the *catbus* and the *totoro* is questionable. The story is strewn with clues that allow both interpretations for and against, which is why the wavering characteristic of the fantastic remains until the end. *Tonari no Totoro* (*My Neighbour Totoro*), the song that closes the film and gives it its title, summarizes in a simple and effective way the poetic sense of the work and the dreamlike atmosphere that characterizes it (Fortes-Guerrero, 2019, pp. 72-75).

Miyazaki does not clarify if the supernatural beings that appear in the story are real or are simply the product of the imagination of the little girls, in need of –given the notable absence of a mother figure– a magical substitute that comforts and helps them in difficult moments. Following from this, the film would be, as Alessandro Bencivenni points out, «a tribute to the creative and emotional resources of childhood, capable even of transfiguring pain; a happy fable in which the sensation of mourning and loss is constantly present» (Bencivenni, 2003, p. 90, own translation). Whatever the case may be, what is evident in *My Neighbour Totoro* is, on the one hand, the important role that fantasy

can play in helping to overcome deficiencies and traumas –especially in the case of childhood–, and on the other hand, the capacity of cinema to reproduce the marvellous. Hence George Méliès' affirmation that films have the extraordinary power to capture dreams.

Conclusion

The fact that Miyazaki's movies share similar characteristics to fairy tales leads us to take into account the main target they are addressed to, which is none other than the child audience, as it was said at the beginning of this chapter. From this point of view, the director's work can be considered as an «educative project» whose goal is to help children –especially in Japan, where they are taught a sense of responsibility and self-management at a very early stage– to enter adulthood, to find their own identity, and to interact with the world. In this way, Miyazaki's artistic production becomes a sort of animated teaching manual for kids, providing them with a set of values and guiding them on the initiatory journey –his stories are full of physical and spiritual voyages– towards (self-)knowledge, without avoiding the burden of suffering and the experience of death linked with it. At the same time, while encouraging the child's inner development, Miyazaki's films also show the importance of fantasy in such process, stating that this allows children to take care of their psychological and emotional needs at critical moments–fantasy thus becomes a magic substitute for the possible shortcomings in the kids' lives and a great support when they face daily problems, as we have already seen in *My Neighbour Totoro*. In so doing, our auteur's oeuvre also reveals hidden aspects of this world, displaying what it might be, since the world is full of wonders and small miracles –it is «marvellous» in itself. And going into this subject in depth, Miyazaki ultimately invites us to think about what is «true» and what is not, taking into account that what we call «fantasy» might be considered in Japan –a place where the visible and the invisible, the ordinary and the extraordinary, the human and the divine continuously mingle– as «real» as our ordinary «reality» –not to mention that, from the Buddhist perspective, so important in the East, everything is empty and devoid of substance.

However, despite being mainly addressed to a child audience, the cinema of the Japanese director also sends a warning notice to parents –whose image tends to be quite negative in his films, if not directly inexistent–, urging them to pay (more) attention to their daughters and sons and to learn from them, since children are not only a potent link between adults and the sacred which dwells in nature –something possible thanks to their purity and innocence–, but also the only ones able to redeem some of the evil caused by us –let us remember the case of *Spirited Away*–, and, consequently, the future of our world itself.

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MONSTERS IN THE CLASSROOM: ESSAY ABOUT FANTASTICAL CREATURES IN ART TEACHING AND THEIR CONNECTION TO THE DIGITAL ERA

Inês Garcia

Monsters and Fantasy

In a general way fantasy presents itself as a fiction genre where the events that happen are impossible to happen in reality (being frequent the use of magic, powers, new or surreal technologies, different realities, alternative futures, among others). In this theme there is a major predominance for this settings which differ from reality although there are exceptions. This area is very wide when it comes to use and mediums: in general the subjects of interest are broad and comprehend several in which we highlight as the most recognized literature (from fictional to myths, tales, comic books), the visual arts (painting, sculpting, illustration, engraving, etc) and multimedia, where cinema (which encompasses all its categories, with a special focus on animation and television series) and videogames, who with the passing of time gather more and more projection with a very broad and wide array of options, styles and themes.

Monsters or fantastical beings are capable of representing and characterize all shapes, identities, desires, thoughts and politic intentions, through their complex and sometimes grotesque bodies. They present themselves as creatures with a very rich historical background and most cultures and societies have monsters and mythologies adapted to their own cultural and historical context which is a symptom of their own experiences and a reflection of their political and philosophic views of the world.

The monster ends up being a cultural identity built on the product that is generated from the ideology of a society, fundamentally on the differences and diversities: it touches matters, fears and anxieties that inhabit these epochs, their own social, economic or politic issues and that is why it has a great potential when it comes to education, throughout all that it represents. Since ancient societies monsters have been created in art, literature, in folklore and religion as ways to teach or guide members of certain groups. However the monster also represents the exception, the distortion, the evasion of the norm or rule (which were seen in the natural world). With this in mind the monster teaches about everything that is different, needs an explanation or an incessant search of knowledge to justify it anyways:

> Monsters, of course, have always been educational. Since ancient times, societies around the world have invented monsters in art, literature, folklore, and religion as a way to teach something to members of a group. Monsters sometimes perform supernatural and mythical functions in a community, serving as portents, as object lessons, or as central figures in a society's construction of cultural heroes. Monsters have also performed sociological function, embodying a society's deepest fears, signifying difference and defining the Other, and reinforcing cultural boundaries (Golub and Richardson, 2017, p. 8).

Curiously a study about monsters never talks only about them. These present themselves as highly efficient vehicles to teach about cultural analysis, to help grow critical imagination, and to create connections between interdisciplinar knowledge and even promoting students to create new models of reality (Golub and Richardson, 2017). The anthropologist David Gilmore (2003, p. 12) accesses that our mind needs monsters, because they have always been created by mankind since the beginning of times so they can deposit their fears and anxieties and give them shape.

Thomas W. Malone defends that one of the main motives for this connection is identification: «fantasies are most likely to fulfill emotional needs when they provide imaginary characters with whom the individual can identify» (Malone, 1987, p. 241), which means that

empathy with a fantasy character and its performance throughout a narrative is a fundamental factor for the individual to relate with his characteristics or situations. Beyond that, the feelings of admiration, appreciation and even affection that the reader creates for the character are very important factors in bringing fantasy and fiction closer to reality.

Fantastical beings are for definition appellative images to our eyes that in an educational context allow the teacher to capture the attention of students to a certain subject utilizing a motto in which they can relate or see themselves, fostering the innate condition of human curiosity and diverting it to learning.

The Monster inside the classroom and its relationship with pop culture

Generally it is with a mix of curiosity and awe that our Concept Art subject[1] starts in the beginning of the semester. This discipline is optative and it's available on the common branch of the graduation in Visual Arts, Technologies and Multimedia which allows to conclude that in their great majority students are only present by their own choice. When questioned why selecting a subject with this kind of theme the answers are unanimous: it's something they like, something they want to know more about. And because it's something rarely approached in an academical context.

In light of this mentioned vantages, our main purpose in this subject consisted in creating characters from start to finish, that should have into consideration the setting of the character, the way they would behave and simultaneously the worldbuilding they would need to exist in a proper and cohesive way. For that matter, building a character consists in a few steps: 1) creating a mood board based on references for the future character; 2) thinking about the creature and it's setting: will it be fierce? A hero or a villain? Or adorable? Will it live under the sea? Or under the ground? 3) thinking visually: creating sketches with different shapes; 4) choosing the parts that better fit the creature; 5)

[1] Concept Art is an optative subject that we have at Eselx - Escola Superior de Educação do Instituto Politécnico de Lisboa.

details related to the creature's nature, powers and physical attributes and finally, 6) Creature's turnarounds and color/texture details.

Although, what does it mean *to like* this matter? Why do they feel this interest? The great majority of students claims to be a subject in which they relate and sometimes even works as an escape to their own daily experiences: «Fantastical Creatures are an escape and they bring me happiness, there are no limits, I can create and imagine whatever I want, create what I want, as an artist [art student] it's the best thing ever» (excerpt of an interview to the student F. S.).

A bit all over the world there have been more academical offers of courses and graduations that approach fantastical beings in several areas[2]. The majority of teachers that approach this theme, no matter the area, report very similar reactions by their students: they seem astonished, curious and mainly attentive and watchful, for they might be interested in the subject but they do not know how it will be handled nor do they know what kind of information they are getting –some unpredictability–.

By the qualities already mentioned, we know how seductive the monster can be, however, it's necessary that the students understand that even though the classes are related to the fantastical it does not mean that they are easier or less demanding than any other class: «A monstrous course is a "fun" class that can also be rigorous, using student's pre-existing interest as a motor to propel them into deeper academic waters» (Golub and Richardson, 2017, p. 162). According to

[2] There are increasingly more areas of studies/research dedicated to the representation and utility of the monster in different knowledge areas. It is named *Monster Studies*. Some of the institutes that are developing this kind of studies are: the NYU, New York University, which has a degree (major) that emphasis the importance of the monster in literature, anthropology and religion (*Monster Studies: Cool Course Dispatch*); the California State University of Fullerton presents the degree *American Monsters*, where the focus of study is the monster on the American Culture, the degree *Fairy Tales and Creativity-Nordic Childhoods* of the Oslo Metropolitan University, which give emphasis to the importance of myths in education and teaching; there is also the post-graduation of the Dundee University entitled *Science Fiction* which includes themes associated with the fantastical universe, There are also initiatives from Faculty of Humanities of the University of Lisbon related to Science Fiction and the Fantastical universe with the *O Fantástico e o Maravilhoso na Idade Média* (The Fantastical and Wonderful of the Middle Ages) and the international association that promotes the study of this subject in literature, film and other arts named *IAFA-The International Association for the Fantastic in the Arts*, amongst others.

the History Professor of Charleston, W. Scott Poole, the use of monsters can also help in comprehension of the subject that is being focused on, as does the following student: «It's not the traditional way of someone to learn. For instance, math or history, that for me are a little boring, when associated with this subject [creatures], become more interesting» (excerpt of interview to the student L. G.). In this way we are discovering new ways to learn with monsters: nowadays the mind does not only need monsters, but also a pedagogy that includes them (Gilmore, 2003). In the opinion of Jessica Decker, using monsters in the classroom presents benefits as an easing theme and as a metaphor to which one can apply concepts of identity in a safe and clear way. The fact that it is a motivating theme is also related to its regular presence in popular culture and mythology –areas which are familiar to the students making it a study object more accessible for being of their own knowledge, at a first glance, and an easier subject if the student has a relation to it–.

The use of monsters as metaphors makes possible for a creative space to without limits to exist. The possibility to use fantastical beings as vehicles of projection when facing questions related to difference (the other) relating to the human condition, animal, machine, cultural questions, gender issues, etc. allows for a greater understanding of the established limits at several levels, of social particularities and above all a greater knowledge when it comes to identity.

Monsters also serve simultaneously to distance ourselves in a safe way from other types of behaviors and also for us to analyze and compare our convictions when it comes to personal identity, acting as a concrete medium where students project their own conceptualizations regarding fantasy and creativity.

This type of themes consist in a good way of to integrate students in a creative and productive way, acting as effective resources in their development, to prepare them to future challenges, questions and issues that might arrive in the future of his own learning or personal life[3]. In this kind of situation, the student has the means to actively

[3] Of course that when we defend the use of tools associated to fantasy and videogames in general, we also have to highlight that these are not the only tools available. As Château (1975, pp. 133-135) asserts «education has to distance itself from entertainment in certain

pursue a significance, being able to relate the subject's theme to his own interests and experiences, transforming the act of learning into something richer and even practical in future situations. «In this way the student will easily remember what was learnt [...] in a way that stimulates its [own] concerns» (Pereira, 2013, p. 23).

Taking these themes into consideration for classroom purposes, they will contribute for students to feel more rewarded from the way they learn certain matters (being there ward something that Johnson defends being the main reason for individuals to learn faster with videogames than any other mean):

> To date, there has been very little direct research into the question of how games manage to get kids to learn without realizing that they're learning. But a strong case can be made that the power of games to captivate involves their ability to tap into the brain's natural reward circuitry (Johnson, 2005, p. 34).

Our experience: the importance of fantastical fiction in artistic learning

> [...] fantastical subjects are very interesting and driving in artistic education. In my opinion this kind of learning helps creativity grow. It's a pleasure for me to create in the fantastic context and to experience other artists doing so. For me, fantasy and concept art are enablers that helped in some way to imagine and materialize things that had not been represented in other ways before (excerpt of the interview to the student V. B.).

The opinion of this student does not leave us space for any other kind of reading or interpretation: he is pleased with the approach and inclusion of this kind of matters in his education, which lead us to assert the premise we stand by, regarding the use of fantastical themes (monsters) being valid in areas of knowledge and study, more precisely in this context of art education.

aspects... education that only relied in gaming would isolate man from life and would make him live an illusory life». Regarding learning we also need to create challenges, and to force students out of the *comfort zone*, as Peter Filene states. In short it is necessary to understand this type of use in a fair way to balance the learning experience.

Even though a great plurality when it comes to expression, experimentation and great liberty nowadays, there are factors that should not be ignored when it comes to learning with observation and figure drawing, such as technical quality, anatomical rigor, and other observation skills to apply when creating art. An observation exercise or even figurative drawing are demanding tasks which need a high level of focus, attention, discipline and motivation.

Although the majority of students express enjoyment when it comes to creating fantastic characters and universes (associated with the growing field of concept art[4]) the feelings of anxiety, impatience, worrying and excessive competitiveness are common and sometimes translate to lacking results and demotivation associated with the fear of failing that students bear, among other considerations. However, allying these types of exercises to the fantastical theme the enjoyment and satisfaction of students is quite visible, because they can put into practice all the demanded elements (graphic quality, observation, anatomical rigor, perspective, etc.) developing their creativity in a less restrictive way and lessening the previous fears:

> […] to continue drawing made me evolve a lot more than before with the subject of Concept Art. Because of that I feel that the insertion of fantasy helped me in becoming more creative. I think that evolution was due to being able to work with a theme I enjoy a lot, because it is what I consume as a medium when it comes to movies, videogames, comics… For being a subject that allows me to make characters for videogames it let me be more imaginative and more interested in drawing. I also started giving a bigger priority to this subject because it was the one I enjoyed the most, and where I worked harder. […] After frequenting this subject I noticed a big difference in the way I drew, by seeing my works being exhibited in the end of the year… I think the critical part of me developed, and I changed the way I look at things when it comes to drawing and experiencing new things (excerpt of the interview with the student H. M.).

[4] In a succinct way, this nomenclature is a byproduct of a creative development process of a project (videogame, movie, comic book, etc.) in the form of drawing, illustration and other mediums. It aims to express and represent in a visual way ideas and concepts.

With this premise as a base, we present in Figure 1 one illustration of a fantastical character developed for the subject of Concept Art. In this example we can understand the will to reach a certain degree of anatomical rigor, of live drawing (with some influences from scientifical illustration) even if some errors occur in the structure and the connection with fictional elements.

Figure 1: Illustration made for the subject of Concept Art by the student F.S.
Source: Personal collection of the author, academic year 2018/2019.

Meanwhile, in Figure 2 we denote not only a bigger consolidation when it comes to the importance of the aesthetic theme when it comes to artistic behavior as well as a certain maturation and enlightenment when it comes to the previously mentioned elements that translate into a excuse for motivation, as well as the use of different materials in its making, such as digital treatment of the image using digital painting.

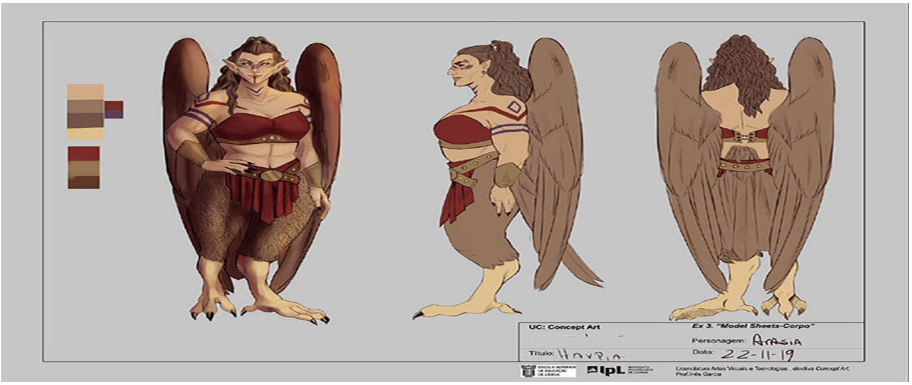

Figure 2: Illustration made for the subject of Concept Art by the student J.S.
Source: Personal collection of the author, academic year 2019/2020.

Regarding this it becomes equally pertinent to describe and justify the activities developed in that elation with several of the statements the students made, became in some way responsible for this good habits that were developed and an increase of graphic quality that was shown. But in what measurement was this done?

The strategy was split into phases: *brainstorming*, reference searching (*mood board*), experimentation (*thumbnailing*) and *character design* (development and completion). This type of activities that are related to the creation of characters can be used as multidisciplinary material that cross knowledge from distinct areas (welcoming in this way the development and growth of the student).

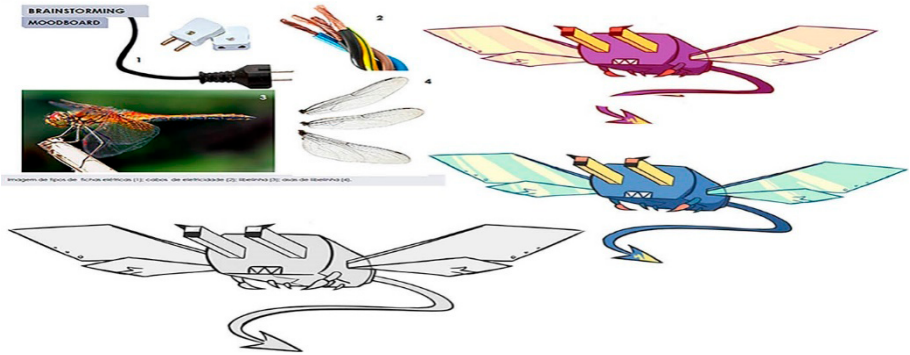

Figure 3: Creative process developed by the student L. R. in 2018. The objective of this activity was to create, step-by-step a fantastical creature based in different elements (animals and everyday objects) applied to the context of videogames. We can see the before mentioned phases, such as the brainstorming and mood board, the elaboration of sketches, the search for the form – silhouette and thumbnails; finalized art in black and white and finally color iterations–.
Source: Personal collection of the author, academic year 2018.

In these case study (when it comes to artistic education) the students developed several skills, in which we are interested in highlighting twelve:

1. Comprehension, interpretation, narrative: skills regarding language, problem solving and logic. Before creating a fantastical character they need to define their framework (the so called *setting*);

2. Logic: by determining the cohesion of the universe they are creating –students fill a form (*briefing*) with a series of questions that aim to help the creative process when it comes to the conceptual component of the character they are creating–. This skills imply that several decisions (related to the course of the creature) are made along the process such as logic ones;

3. Investigation (multidisciplinarity): after deciding on the setting the students are asked to investigate information related to several

areas (examples of human anatomy, comparative anatomy, and several branches of biology) important for the coherence of the universe they are creating. In a posterior phase of research the use of good habits is encouraged, for students to use quotes to support their work and to learn which sources to use and how to have more consistency when it comes to various references used on their work (which all is applied on the mood board they have to create);

4. Improvisation/creative development (brainstorming): allied to the continuous research the systemization of creativity unlocking exercises is also encouraged (such as pareidolia, tables with several possible different element combinations, etc.), shape exploration and fast sketching (thumbnails). This phase envelops the creation of new connections between various elements (which can be related to animals, objects or other combinations) that promote a disruptive way of creation and the birth of new associations on how to apply creativity;

5. Selection and definition: after the first sketches students learn how to select and justify their options according to the goals they want to reach, and start defining and adding detail to their creations as well as elaborating storyboards or other visual representations. In this phase the appliance of transversal painting and drawing knowledge;

6. Shape, line and proportions mastery, through the notions of movement: these concepts are approached since the thumbnail phase to the final development and assume the gesture, the movement action lines, the antigravitational muscles, the basic shapes (head, torso and hip), shape theory and outline;

7. Coherence: to guarantee the connection between the initial concept and idea and its visual appearance, enveloping accessories and props, as well as backgrounds and interactions between other elements and characters;

8. Synthesis and shape exaggeration: use of the line and its variations when it comes to expression, as well as being able to

identify the differences between a realistic, proportional drawing and an exaggerated, stylized or caricaturized one;

9. Proportion, Anatomy: through the incentive to compare human and animal structures that make sense between each other, by having basic notions of articulations, structures and bending muscles for students to understand how and where does movement occur in the body and how can they exaggerate it, or even on the incorporation and adaption of animal anatomy and details (ex: fur types, markings, eye variation, horns, etc.);

10. Scale and Perspective: to understand the importance of ratio and proportion to solve problems. Character positioning in relation to other characters or elements. Size is a relevant factor to understand how a character adapts to its own universe: «During the design process, it is important to determine how large or small the creature is; size gives us a better perspective on how an animal fits into its world and what it needs to do in order to survive» (Schaan, 2015, p. 26);

11. Live Drawing (Live model drawing), transposition and adaptation of elements: this component was tested through the use of a live model drawing sessions with actors in which the goal was not to directly draw the actor but they own creations, representing the movement the actor was giving them. The movements the actor was executing were related to the character they had previously developed within a limited schedule;

12. Color, light and shadow: through experimentation of several color and accessory variations (iterations) as well as using light and shadow to highlight or hide certain elements of the character.

Figure 4: Live drawing session with *cosplayers* (*Costume play*: acting and representation of characters by recreating them not only by their image and clothing but also movement and expressions. Said characters can be from videogames, movies, anime, manga, comics, etc.).
Source: Personal collection of the author, academic year 2018/2019.

Meanwhile, even though we highlight these twelve elements as good strategies to use in the development of artistic education in the field of drawing with the fantastical as a theme, it's necessary to remember that this method does not constitute in any way a substitute of the usual strategies but a very useful motivational complement that allows the expansion of concepts as well as principles that are present in other activities, while also developing creativity and imagination and contributes to a better motivation and satisfaction of students for its methods that differ from the usual ones applied in the context of learning, class books and classrooms.

Final Considerations

We consider that is beneficial to insert new methods that ease dynamism in pedagogy adjusted to the realities we are living in and as Professor Ana Pereira states without this type of help «the students grow without preparation to face a future that is not easy, that is always changing and that surrounds them with problems to solve in which

without having the ability to reflect, problematize, to create solutions, of changing, will not let them find the due integration that is needed» (Pereira, 2013, p. 9). Pereira rounds up that learning and teaching is a constant challenge that needs to be in constant update to avoid crystallizing without any chance of modernization:

> Today's challenges that face a success learning experience are several. Humanity has created different moments and spaces that are more ambitious, faster, more intense and more demanding, which means that being a teacher in the 21st century means to assume that knowledge and students change at a faster speed than what we were used to and that we have to double up our efforts to keep learning and to keep up with students (Pereira, 2013, p. 8).

There should also exist a constant feeling of challenge and achievement, when it comes to learning, that can be compared to videogames. Collateral learning can be more important, for intellectual benefits that come from videogames derive from that virtue: to learn how to think also means to learn how to make the right decisions (Johnson, 2005). The students that were interviewed also mention those same benefits associated with fantastical beings in videogame contexts alleging they have the «capacity to transmit something through a new medium less literal and common» (excerpt of an interview to the student R. P.), being a good help to retain information, as a discovery process:

> Very interesting, especially when we are older […] we are always listening the same subjects since first grade, [although] in more depth, becoming more complicated, but still the same. I learnt the same information in History in the 3rd and 4th grade and repeated the same information years later in the 10th or 12th grade, and it all comes to a point where things were repeated so much we start losing details in between […] by putting it all in mixed with fantastical beings that reflect the culture and we shake things a bit it makes everything more interesting because it makes all the details of this point of view capture our attention, we will be searching for the, for new associations by learning things this way and when we are

> back to reality, we can see new connections [...] everything becomes more layered and interesting and learning about it becomes richer (excerpt of the interview to C. M.).

By simulating a space inside the classroom that is more unpredictable, the environment becomes more interactive and productive. This experience can perfectly be adapted to the scope of artistic teaching: in this way a more practical type of learning is instigated full of experiences and simulations that are used to create a critical way of thinking. Just as the author John Edgar browning states pedagogy through monsters can help teachers: «Monster pedagogy, therefore, can provide educators with a critical tool with which to facilitate the re-examination of cultural and historical prejudices» (Ahmad and Moreland, 2013, pp. 40-41).

Due to its multidisciplinary nature that might cross between several areas, fantastical beings stimulate curiosity and can be used to promote a more active learning: «Expand your students' skills and experiences by having them do their own creative world building and create their own unique creatures to populate it» (Schaan, 2015, p. 61).

Its use on books, movies, videogames, board games or other mediums creates empathy on the student and helps him on the process of learning, by reinforcing, enriching and retaining much more information than in a traditional experience, as well as helping in synthetizing knowledge and the reasoning/supporting the executed work: «[...] fantasies can also provide useful metaphors for learning new skills [...] and they can provide examples or real-world contexts in which the new skills could be used [...]» (Malone, 1987, p. 240).

It is not only in the Visual Arts area that fantasy can be used as an advantage, its own applications in science when subordinated to the theme of Science Fiction, has a great adherence by the majority of students. This theme becomes useful to illustrate and apply several concepts and biologic, anatomical and evolutionary principles, like taxonomical categorization of extinct species, allowing students to make the bridge between fantasy and knowledge. Professor Andrea Bixler also supports this utility when she stats the following:

> Using science fiction to teach evolutionary biology has several major benefits. First, it provides an engaging medium for exploring concepts that are difficult because they are abstract. [...] Second, science fiction provides many illustrations of evolution. [...] Third, science fictional examples of evolution may be used in an active-learning format to spur true scientific thinking (application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation) and help students solidify their knowledge and comprehension of the material (Bixler, 2007, p. 337).

With this in mind and with our experience here presented through the interviews recorded from students, work strategies, student projects, and all the other materials acquired for this investigation there is a common agreement in the usefulness and integration of the Fantastical theme in learning implying that it can be a crucial element of promotion and development of creativity associated with innovation, and so famously associated with the idea of «thinking out of the box»:

> In class [...] they are always telling us to run from "the box"! But what they usually teach us is exactly the same things, so how are we going to escape the box if we are not given motivation [...] or at least an example? With Fantastical Beings we can finally see things out of the box because these are things that do not exist, [...] our creative thinking can evolve just by looking at this type of references. In Fantastical Beings there are no limits, we can create everything! What is more "out of the box" than that? And if teachers want us "out of the box" why do they teach us inside of it? (excerpt of interview to the student F. S.).

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FANTASY TO TALK ABOUT REALITY: YORGOS LANTHIMOS' CINEMA

Mikel Peña Sarrionandia

Introduction

It is hard to discuss some topics bluntly. Often, they can be better understood from afar. These are topics such as the meaning of existence, love, humanity, family or power. Sometimes taking a step back is necessary in order to see how artificial some ideas that we have always deemed certain are.

Yorgos Lanthimos does just this in order to reflect on these topics; «I make something very unrealistic, in order to show something very realistic» (Passa, 2017) Efthimis Filippou, the scriptwriter who has written most of Lanthimos' films, said in an interview. The Greek director introduces absurd and exaggerated premises. At first, they may seem like situations that are far from reality. However, once examined in greater detail, there is an underlying raw critique of today's society, as Vanoye and Goliot-Lété stated-following Umberto Eco's lessons, regarding socio-historical analysis:

> La hipótesis directriz de una interpretación socio-histórica se basa en el principio según el cual una película «habla» siempre del presente (o siempre «dice» algo sobre el presente, del aquí y ahora respecto a su contexto de producción). El hecho de que sea una película histórica o de ciencia ficción no cambia nada.
> [The main hypothesis of a socio-historic interpretation is based on the

> principle that a film always «talks» about the present time (or always «mentions» the present, the here and now in terms of its production). The fact that it is historical or science fiction does not change that] (Vanoye and Goliot-Lété, 2008, p. 61).

The German philosopher Theodor Adorno stated that in psychoanalysis nothing is true except the exaggerations, and it seems as though Lanthimos develops modern society's problems based on the same premise. «Lanthimos aims for a re-evaluation of all modern assumptions and sensibilities and opens to question the taken-for-grantedness of the substantiality of interiority» (Sisman, 2020):

> The films of Lanthimos explore the contemporary neoliberal society and the structures of its human relationships through an exhibitionist and presentational paradigm of storytelling. The films consist of reconstructions and deconstructions of reality through the hyphenated and accentuated presentation of parallel social microcosms (Rosinski, 2017, p. 228).

Lanthimos uses fictitious elements in order to ignite reflection on reality. To demonstrate this, two of his features will be analysed as part of this research, *The Lobster* (2015) and *Nimic* (2019). Thus, the way that the director uses unreal elements to bring up real issues will be studied.

The Lobster, a sample of modern romantic relationships

When discussing the use of fantasy to mirror reality, the use of dystopia cannot be disregarded. Dystopia is a tool often used in both literature and cinema in order to emphasise and criticise the characteristics of modern society. As mentioned by Vladana Ilić, every utopian narrative criticises some characteristic from the real world:

> Constructing a utopian narrative (whether a utopian, dystopian, or anti-utopian) then inevitably becomes a political act-one that, by inventing a non-existent society, references the real one, comments on and criticizes it, exposes its mechanisms, chooses to resist or support it and therefore,

> explicitly or implicitly, encourages or discourages a change. In that sense, by «voicing» a utopian narrative [...] we consciously and intentionally enter the public dialogue, assume the position of an interlocutor in it, and voice our political attitude, i.e. our thoughts, opinions, feelings, and assertions of the social, cultural, and/or economic state of our world (Ilić, 2017, p. 468).

In *The Lobster*, the director uses dystopia as a resource in order to reflect on the way romantic relationships are sought and lived in modern society. Lanthimos explained the film's objective during an interview for *The Washington Post*:

> We make observations about the way we live and organize our lives –and structure our societies – so we wanted to do something about romantic relationships and how single people are treated within society. The pressure that is on them in order to be with someone and... the pressure that they put on themselves to be with someone. What we like to do is push those situations to extremes in order to reveal the absurdity behind them, behind things that we consider normal in our everyday life (Bonos, 2016).

As mentioned during the interview, Lanthimos condemns modern society for pushing single people to find partners. Therefore, he creates a dystopian society where being single is prohibited. In the film, single people, widows or divorced people are taken to a hotel and they have 45 days in order to find a partner. If they are not able to find a partner within that period of time, they are turned into an animal of their choice. David, the main character, asks to be turned into a lobster if he is unable to complete the task, hence the title *The Lobster*.

As seen in the film, single people who are unable to find a suitable partner become lower beings. Film critic Benjamin Dodman analyses the film from that point of view: «The premise is that monogamous relationships are what distinguish us from beasts. Those who fail to find a partner are therefore unworthy of the human race» (Dodman, 2015). Stephanie Merry makes a similar observation: «Single people may not be so explicitly devalued in our world, but as any unattached

woman in her 40s will tell you, the message is the same: If you're not paired up, there must be something wrong with you» (Merry, 2016).

During a scene at the hotel, it is clearly stated that having a partner is more beneficial than being single. The hotel employees go on stage and play a series of scenes for the guests, comparing single people and couples. During those acts, of course, single people always end up badly. For example, during one of the acts, a woman is walking by herself. A man sees her and rapes her. During the next act, a woman is walking with a man. The rapist sees her, but he does not go near her. Applause.

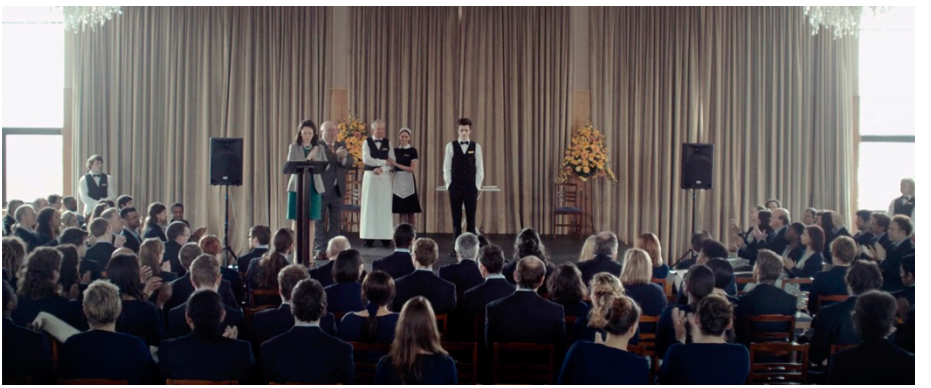

Figure 1: A demonstration of the benefits of being in a couple (The Lobster, 2015).

Besides bringing up the pressure to find a partner, Lanthimos also creates the opportunity to reflect on the way modern society develops affective relationships. Nevertheless, before getting into that, some concepts regarding romantic and postmodern love need to be clarified.

Guido Arditi (2018) claims that romantic love was created in response to the alienation that capitalism brought. According to Arditi, the industrialised jobs in capitalism started to treat employees like another piece of the process chain. Modern jobs were inflexible tasks, which had to be repeated mechanically over and over again, leaving no room for creativity and the individuals' personalities. These types of jobs destroyed employees' humanity. At the same time, as the employee's humanity was denied, every employee could be replaced by anyone.

Therefore, the work lost its previous meaning, and the employee was no longer able to describe themselves based on their occupation. This process brought about the depersonalisation and the loss of identity of the worker.

According to Arditi, romantic love was born in response to the alienation workers endured:

> Aquella identidad que es desdibujada en el ámbito del trabajo, les es restituida a los sujetos modernos a través de sus parejas; las cuales devienen parte integral de su identidad. Pues significan la existencia de un otro para el cual aquello que piensan, hacen, proponen o dicen es importante. Y, por lo tanto, es a través de este otro que adquieren un atestiguamiento de sí y dan sentido a sus vidas.
> [The identity that is eradicated at work is replaced for modern subjects by their partners, who become an integral part of their identity. They mean the existence of a subject for whom what they think, do, suggest and say is important. Therefore, they become their own selves through them and give meaning to their lives] (Arditi, 2018, p. 45).

Through romantic love, individuals could obtain the acknowledgement that work had denied them. «There is a second individual for whom we make a difference, for whom we are not easy to replace or get rid of easily» (Arditi, 2018, p. 45). Therefore, through partners and family, individuals were able to give meaning to their lives in a cold, competitive and unstable capitalist world.

Nevertheless, in the postmodern society, relationships have changed and some aspects of romantic love have become despicable. In opposition to romantic love, Zygmunt Bauman (2005) talks about what he calls liquid love, where the stability and security of old romantic relationships becomes *liquid*:

> Las prácticas románticas nos orientan a comprometernos en el mantenimiento de relaciones profundas, a dejarnos llevar por la emoción, a sacrificarnos por el otro, considerando estas, características de real o verdadero amor. Por el contrario, las prácticas líquidas, abogan por relaciones libertarias, superficiales y hedónicas, abordadas

> de forma racional, siendo prácticas comunes en las relaciones virtuales. [The romantic practices make us commit to having deep relationships, to being taken by emotion, to sacrificing for the other, and we consider these characteristics of true love. On the contrary, the liquid practices advocate libertarian, superficial and hedonistic relationships, which include a rational approach and are common in virtual relationships] (Sánchez-Sicilia and Cubells, 2018, p. 168).

In a postmodern capitalist society based on consumerism, romantic relationships also become a consumer object. Romantic love was based on emotions, but liquid love is completely rational. Finding a date on *Tinder* is like buying a product at the supermarket.

On the subject of *Tinder*, Bauman mentions that the «consumption» of relationships through the Internet and apps is one of the characteristics of liquid love. As a matter of fact, thanks to the Internet, users can have sporadic relationships without fear, because they know they can go back to the app and «buy another product on the market» should that relationship fail (Hobbs, Owen and Gerber, 2017, p. 272).

It could be said that modern society is struggling between these two types of love, between romantic love and liquid love, between emotions and rationalism. *The Lobster* is set in a dystopia, it takes place in the future, and in that near future, the latter –the liquid and rational love– wins the battle. The type of love that can be seen in the film is not exactly like Bauman describes it, but there are clear references to liquid love, as it will be explained now.

On the one hand, there is a clear reference to dating apps in the feature, which is one of the characteristics of liquid love. On those apps, people pursue similarity when looking for a partner and, in the film, single people are encouraged to look for similarities as well. «That obsession with matching characteristics seems like a satire of the questionnaire-based compatibility algorithms on dating sites like OKCupid» (Robinson, 2016).

In fact, rather than encouraged, single people are actually forced. In order to find a partner in that dystopian world, it is compulsory to have something in common with the other person. That is what the

manager of the hotel explains to David on the first day: «Just think, as an animal you'll have a second chance to find a companion. But, even then, you must be careful; you need to choose a companion that is a similar type of animal to you. A wolf and a penguin could never live together, nor could a camel and a hippopotamus. That would be absurd, think about it».

In the film, the search for similarities is pushed to the limit. Thus, the defining characteristic of each character, what defines them best, will need to be identified and they will need to find a partner with matching characteristics. One particular character in the film is called John. One day, John entered the wolf enclosure because his mother had turned into one of the wolves. However, the wolves attacked him and, as a result, he has a limp, which is now his defining characteristic. He therefore needs to find a woman with a limp as a suitable partner. During a scene, David says: «New guests arrived yesterday, I think I saw a woman with a limp». «It's just a sprained ankle. She'll be walking normally again in a few days», replies John. The woman does not have a limp and therefore is not right for him. «That's a shame», says David.

Robert's defining characteristic is that he has a lisp. Another woman's defining characteristic is that she has a beautiful smile. Another woman's, that she has regular nosebleeds. They are all superficial characteristics, which say nothing about the individual's personality.

When David and another guest at the hotel they call The Heartless Woman meet, the woman tests him to see whether they are compatible. In the jacuzzi, she pretends to be choking on an olive, to see whether David assists her. David stares at the woman and does not help her. Maybe he knows she is pretending, or maybe he does not care whether The Heartless Woman dies or not. In any case, David behaves heartlessly and thus passes the test. When the woman sees this, she tells him: «I think we're a match». These words need to be highlighted, because they make a clear reference to online dating apps. On one of the most famous apps, *Tinder*, users are notified about a suitable partner with the words «It's a match!».

Looking for common characteristics in a possible partner shows very narcissistic behaviour, which can also be interpreted as a characteristic of the postmodern society:

> El capitalismo actual [...] se encarga de reprimir al punto del aniquilamiento de todo deseo no estrictamente individual, limitando la facultad de gozar al mero consumo, dejando solamente en pie a los deseos autocentrados y egoístas. Tal como nos dice Sigmund Freud, la libido sustraída del mundo exterior fue conducida al yo, y así surgió una conducta que podemos llamar narcisismo.
> [Nowadays capitalism [...] represses and even annihilates any non-strictly individual desire, thus restricting the capacity to enjoy consumerism, leaving room for nothing but self-centred and selfish desires. As described by Sigmund Freud, the libido that has been withdrawn from the external world has been directed to the ego and thus gives rise to an attitude which may be called narcissism] (Arditi, 2018, p. 48).

Narcissus is a character from Greek mythology. He was so beautiful that all men and women fell in love with him. However, he was not interested in the others. In fact, he was in love with himself. One day, when he was admiring his own reflection in a pool, he fell into the water and drowned.

As shown by Narcissus' myth, falling in love with oneself might have negative consequences. And maybe looking for oneself in others might also have negative consequences. In fact, wouldn't being in a relationship teach one new things? If a couple is exactly the same, wouldn't that be boring? According to Freud, narcissism is a feeling that goes against love:

> For Freud, «[a] person who loves has, so to speak, forfeited a part of his narcissism, and it can only be replaced by his being loved». Two are needed for love rather than self-love, but Narcissus dwells in *The Lobster* at the very heart of the twosome: what one looks for in the other is what one sees in oneself (Cooper, 2016, p. 166).

As Cooper states, in modern society one looks for in the other what ones sees in oneself, in a process experts call «positive assortative mating». *The Lobster* criticises the narcissism that postmodern society's love generates.

Related to narcissism, the film also displays rationalism, a characteristic linked to liquid love. In fact, as stated by Juan Orellana and

Jorge Martínez in the book *Celuloide Posmoderno*, «narcissism cannot be withdrawn from its link to modern *rationalism,* as it is the most radical version of it» (Orellana and Martínez, 2010, p. 14). The world displayed in *The Lobster* is completely devoid of feelings. As proof of postmodernism, characters show an appalling lack of apathy in an absurd society.

The film's colour scheme reinforces said coldness and apathy. Unsaturated and green colours are predominant in the film, which sometimes lean towards cyan and blue shades, and sometimes towards yellow. Green shades actually bring alienation to mind, and they go against warmer shades like magenta, which bring humanity to mind. Regarding the use of the camera, the director mostly uses wide shots that display the surroundings and the characters' gestures. Lanthimos avoids using any shots that could go more deeply into the characters' emotions.

Over the ending credit roll of the film, Tonis Maroudas and Sophia Loren's «Ti'ne afto pou to lene agape?/What's this thing called love?» from the film *Boy on a Dolphin* (Jean Negulesco, 1957) plays. «What's this thing called love? What is it, what is it?», says the final song in *The Lobster*. Does love exist or has it no room in today's society, as *the loners* think? Do couples need to be similar in order to work well together? Can love be found by only paying attention to superficial things? Lanthimos makes the audience reflect on modern society by using fictional elements. However, it is the audience who need to find the answers. Here is what the director stated during an interview for *The Washington Post*:

> Lanthimos: Why is it like that? And why do we feel that? And why are we organized this way? Isn't there any other way? How is it possible to feel free within that? Is there true love and how can we identify it? How can we keep it and maintain it?
>
> Bonos: Those are all interesting questions. Do you have any answers?
>
> Lanthimos: Of course not. That's why we're making the film, to ask those questions. I think it's interesting when people stop for a second and start to ask those questions and see if they have answers… or if it's important for them to find them. Are we going to die searching,

> or are we going to find it at some point? I don't know. But I think it's important to question some things we take as granted (Bonos, 2016).

Nimic, a sample of replaceability

The short film *Nimic* was released in 2019 at the Locarno Film Festival in Switzerland and after several screenings in different festivals, it hit online platforms. In this 12-minute short film, the audience is presented with the father of a family. He wakes up in the morning and, after having breakfast with his family, he attends his cello rehearsal. However, on his way back, he asks a female stranger what time it is. It is a simple question, but her reply is odd and surprising. After a few seconds in silence, she looks at him and asks, «Excuse me, do you have the time?», simply repeating what the father had said. On top of this, the montage also reinforces said awkwardness, as it seems like the image and the sound are out of sync during the woman's answer. Together with the actor's odd look, the sensation of intrigue and discomfort is ignited.

Figure 2: The woman from the tube (Nimic, 2019).

From that scene on, the female stranger starts imitating the father. She follows him home from the tube. When the father turns a corner, Lanthimos follows his movement by panning the camera, and then, without cutting the scene, he quickly moves it backwards, in

order to show the woman's movements by panning the camera exactly the same way.

The woman is imitating the father's movements and, in order to emphasise that, the director repeats the shots. Both characters walk through the same place and are shown within the same shot. First the father, then the woman.

After walking one after the other through the streets of Mexico City, they both reach home. They arrive with the same bouquet of flowers, holding it in the same way, and doing the same gestures. «Tell her to get out», says the father. «Tell him to get out», says the woman. The mother's reaction is visible right after, through a close-up. She looks at the man, then the woman, and then back at the man. She is confused. The children seem to be confused as well, as can be seen at a later shot. The father tries to defend his place over and over again, but the woman mimics all his moves and the family is confused. The father starts to worry, as the mother and the three children are unable to tell who the real father is. «Children, please, tell your mother who the real father is», begs the father, but the woman repeats his request word for word. «How should we know? We are just kids», the children reply to the father's request.

In order to find a solution, the family decides that it is best to take a test: whose feet fit better with the mother's feet. The mother is lying in bed, in front of all the family members, with a mask over her eyes. First, the father gets close and lies behind her. The mother places his feet among hers and they stay like that for a few seconds. Then, the father gets up and lets the female stranger do the test. Lanthimos finishes the scene by zooming in on the stranger's face: the woman has a subtle smile on her face and the music rises. This way the director predicts the woman's victory, as it can be seen during the next scene.

Figure 3: The mother and the woman in bed (Nimic, 2019).

In fact, during the scene after the test, the woman is seen playing the father's cello in his orchestra, and the audience can clearly see that the mother chose the woman. The father has been replaced, both in the family and the orchestra.

The main theme of this short film is evidently the fear of being replaceable, as Víctor Esquirol states in *Otros Cines Europa*, «Lanthimos invokes the deep fears that can only emerge through the invasion (and later appropriation) of what we deemed not transferable» (Esquirol, 2020).

Nobody is irreplaceable. That is the director's message. Or to be exact, he invites the audience to reflect on that idea, as people tend to perceive their positions (within family, at work...) as certain. The concept is evident during the credits from the beginning through to the end, by the way the letters are altered. Every name has a missing letter, which is then added in the next name. The change is evident because the names have a different font and size. The replacement is particularly evident in the word NIMIC: the «i» in «Patakia» replaces the one in «NIMIC», so it is much smaller.

Figure 4: The letter replacement in the credits (Nimic, 2019).

If all letters had the same font and size, the change would go unnoticed. However, Lanthimos highlights said difference. He makes it clear that the small «i» does not fit in with the large letters of «NIMIC». Nonetheless, there they are, one replacing the other. Going back to the film, it is obvious that the female stranger is not the right replacement for the father. For example, both characters are physically very different. Moreover, during the scene where the woman plays the father's cello, it is obvious she does not know how to play the instrument. The father's orchestra is rehearsing Benjamin Britten's *Sentimental Sarabande*, which is very present from the beginning of the film. However, when the woman takes over the father's place, she does not play well. Therefore, it could be said that the woman is not the right replacement, just like the small «i» in «NIMiC» is not the right fit either. This begs the question, why does the audience (where the father's family is sitting) happily applaud once the show is over? Don't they realise that a member of the orchestra has been replaced by a stranger who does not know how to play the cello?

They do not notice, and that is what makes everyone replaceable. If a person who knows how to play the cello can be replaced by someone who does not, and if no one notices the difference, does it really matter who is on stage? «Who is original and who is fake? Or does it matter at all?», says Srivatsan in *The Hindu* (Srivatsan, 2020).

The audience's indifference makes the person who plays the cello replaceable, and the same happens within the family as well. In that case, the mother's mask is an important symbol. In fact, when the mother and the father wake up at the beginning of the film, the mother has her eyes covered and, when she gets up, she does not look at the father once, nor does he look at her. There is a complete lack of communication between them, which is symbolised by the mask. Moreover, the mother does not say one word during the entire film, even though she is on screen quite often. There is a total lack of communication, because they do not show any intimate bond through looks or gestures either.

If that happens within the family, what can society expect at work, or from the relationships built with other members of society? In modern society, people have lost the ability to communicate or connect in a deep way with others, which leads people to not see other's essence or worth. People pay attention to superficial and arbitrary elements instead: for example, how someone's feet fit with another person's feet, or how they eat their eggs in the morning.

Thus, it can be said that, based on the narrative from *Nimic*, the lack of ability to communicate and connect with each other in postmodern society makes people replaceable.

Everyone is replaceable, but at the same time, everyone can replace anyone. In fact, right after the scene with the orchestra performance, the relegated father can be seen on the tube again, where the woman was sitting in the previous tube scene. And the same event takes place: a young man, sitting where the father used to be, asks him what time it is.

The circle closes: the father has been replaced, but he has been invited to replace somebody else, following the odd rules from Lanthimos' universe. At the same time, the father's former family is seen at home with the female stranger. The first scenes with the father are repeated as the female stranger cooks breakfast, while she is wearing an oversized pyjama (most likely because it belonged to the father). Afterwards, when she joins the other members of the family, they all behave the same as when the father was around. A family member has been replaced, just like a letter from the title has been replaced too. However, as long as everyone can go on with their normal lives, or the main title can still be read in spite of the lettering, *does it matter at all?*

Conclusions

As stated at the beginning, Lanthimos uses fictional or fantastic elements to reflect on aspects of modern society. In *The Lobster* he creates a dystopia where having a partner is compulsory, making the audience reflect on romantic relationships. *Nimic*, on the contrary, is centred on the lack of communication from postmodern society and, by playing with awkwardness, Lanthimos brings up concepts such as replaceability and uselessness.

These are two examples of the way Lanthimos uses fantasy in order to encourage social debate. Analysing the director's work from this point of view adds value to the fantastic genre and it also helps to better understand the Greek director's work and success. Thus, we would like to encourage people to run future research that takes a closer look at the meaning of the nonsensical premises present in films by Lanthimos and the *New Greek Weird Wave*, a movement where the Greek director is usually included.

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MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE LITERATURE AS THE BASIS OF THE FANTASTIC IN DONDE LOS ÁRBOLES CANTAN (LAURA GALLEGO)

Alberto Rodríguez Gómez

Introduction

In fantastic fiction, unreal worlds are created in different ways: it can be an integration of the fantastic in everyday reality, either as an ordinary component of it, or in a way that causes surprise or fear, or the creation of worlds totally invented and far away from the reader's universe (Tejerina, 2005). Despite the great variety that we can find, it is very common for the author to use fictitious references to ancient culture and society to create fantastic elements, such as mythology, the Middle Ages, legends... We can see this in some of today's most popular fantastic works, such as *Harry Potter*, where Greco-Latin culture is combined with popular folklore, or *The Lord of the Rings* and *Game of Thrones*, whose medieval component is the basis of the history. This means that fantasy often has a large intertextual component, either more hidden or more obvious.

In Spain, fantastic novel has traditionally been associated with a young audience. This means that its artistic merit is usually diminished and is not considered worthy of a theoretical or critical study, despite the fact that, many times, in addition to contributing notable human and social values, it contains great literary interest. This work intends to vindicate the high quality and aesthetic value that the «juvenile» fantastic narrative can have, and the importance that sometimes it presents for academic studies.

With that aim, we will address the novel *Donde los árboles cantan* –in English, *Where trees sing*, here in after, *DLAC*–, written and published in 2011 by Laura Gallego García, one of the most outstanding representatives of fantastic literature in Spain. She was born in Quart de Poblet (Valencia) in 1977 and studied Spanish Language and Literature at the University of Valencia. In 1999 she published her first novel, *Finis Mundi*, winning the *El Barco de Vapor* award, promoted by the SM publishing house. Three years later, she received that award again thanks to *La leyenda del rey errante*. Her work, which currently includes more than thirty novels and several children's stories, has sold more than a million copies worldwide and has been translated into sixteen languages, including Japanese. The trilogy *Memorias de Idhún* particularly stands out due to its popularity. In 2011 she received the *Cervantes Chico* prize for all his literary creation, and in 2013 she finished her PhD at the University of Valencia with the thesis *Belianís de Grecia (tercera y quarta parte), de Jerónimo Fernández: edición y estudio*, focused on said book of chivalry of the 16th century. That study inspired the novel *Donde los árboles cantan*, which was awarded in 2012 with the National Prize for Children's and Youth Literature, given by the Ministry of Culture of Spain (Gallego, 2021).

With *Belianís de Grecia* (Jerónimo Fernández, 1545-1579) as a starting point, the author recreates in *DLAC* a book of chivalry in itself, full of numerous medieval and Renaissance literary elements, especially those belonging to the chivalric genre, such as courtly love, the role of the gentleman and the lady at court... All these elements are especially relevant in the configuration of the fantastic component, since they are the direct basis of it. In this chapter we will analyze the main existing fantastic elements in *DLAC* and we will bring to light their relationship with the Spanish aforementioned literary tradition, to show how Laura Gallego has masterfully reinterpreted and adapted them to the 21st century audience.

Synopsis of *DLAC*

Viana de Rocagrís and her father, Duke Corven, attend, as they do every year, King Radis's coronation anniversary during the winter

solstice. A joust is held there and all the nobles of the kingdom of Nortia participate –including Viana's fiancé, Robian–, after which many of them are armed as knights.

The party continues with a dinner at the castle, enlivened with the narration of the legend of the spring of eternal youth by Oki, the minstrel. In the middle of the evening, a man named Lobo bursts in to warn that the barbarian peoples are preparing to invade Nortia, so all the knights, including Viana's fiancé, must prepare for war. That happens months later: the barbarians conquer the kingdom and most of Nortian men, including Viana's father, are killed, whereas others submit to the new king Harak, which is the case of the girl's fiancé. Harak marries the ladies of the court with his warriors to make the men owners of the girls' lands, and for these to give birth to legitimate heirs to said territories.

To save his life, Robian renounces his marriage to Viana, after which she is married to Chief Holdar. Her new husband intends to get her pregnant as soon as possible, but she and her nurse Dorea concoct a deception to prevent it: for months they drug the barbarian daily to make him fall fast asleep at night, and simulate the pregnancy of Viana. As Robian does not come to her rescue, a desire to rebel arises in her, and ends up killing her husband Holdar. The young woman flees into the Great Forest, where she is rescued by the outlaw warrior Lobo. As the punishment for Vianais death, she cannot return to the castle, so she stays to live in the forest and learns how to fight by herself.

After completing her training, she goes into the depths of the forest to look for the supposed spring of eternal youth, and, along the way, she meets a strange humanoid who behaves as if he had no memory, and to whom she decides to call Uri. Viana instructs him in the basic actions of people –walking, eating...– and returns with him to the place from which she left, where a small resistance against the barbarians had been formed. There, Uri learns to live among humans and, little by little, begins to speak like them, which facilitates communication. Over time, the strange being and Viana end up falling in love. In a second journey to the depths of the forest, this time with Uri, the young woman discovers that the legendary spring is the sap of some trees that have the ability to sing, and that the barbarians are destroying them to appropriate the precious liquid and create an invincible army.

Finally, after several dangerous situations among which she is almost executed by the barbarians, Viana and Lobo manage to enter King Harak's castle and kill him, thus freeing the kingdom of Nortia. Then, the girl discovers that Uri is really one of the singing trees, magically transformed into a human, who had turned to them for help to prevent the slaughter of the barbarians against her people. When everything goes well in the kingdom again, Uri transforms into a tree, returning to its original state, and is planted in the garden of Viana's castle for the rest of her life. After many years, when she grows old and dies, she is buried at the foot of the tree, and from that same place a plant grows and coils around the trunk, remaining that way until, after several generations of heirs of Rocagrís, both plants end up drying up. The inhabitants keep them in its place as family heritage.

Several centuries later, to celebrate the fiftieth birthday of the Lord of Rocagrís, a dinner is held at the castle, attended by Oki, the minstrel, who enlivens the evening by narrating the story of the tree in the garden: the adventure of Uri and Viana.

Analysis of the fantastic elements of the novel

The fantastic component of *DLAC* is made up of three main elements, which we will delve into below: the space-time setting, the magical character chronicler of the story, and the transformations of human beings into plants.

Space-time setting

The universe in which the story of *DLAC* takes place is completely fictional, so it is set in imaginary and exotic places, just like what happens in chivalric books, where real spaces, such as Greece or Spain, are combined with other totally invented, for example, Laura or Gaula (Rodríguez, 2016, p. 274). The existence of this type of fantastic locations entails the use of an invented toponymy, which, in chivalric books, is composed mainly of plant elements, especially with floral allusions, as in Florisbella, Matarrosa and Primaflor, characters from *Belianís de Grecia*, or in Florando of England and Florisel of Niquea. Other types of plants

are also used, such as Olivante of Laura, Silves of the Selva or Palmerín of Oliva, where, as can be seen, not only the names of characters, but also of places, present these characteristics. In the same way, in the toponymy of *DLAC*, plant elements are interspersed with other natural elements that allude to the sea, the landscape, the snow..., such as Rocagrís, Castelmar, Belrosal, Campoespino or Valnevado.

On the other hand, while in the chivalric genre the action can cover very diverse geographies completely distant from each other, all the events of *DLAC* take place in the different domains of the kingdom of Nortia, as well as in the Great Forest, a space that dominates the second part of the work. Despite these differences, locations and landscapes similar to those of chivalric books constantly appear in the novel, such as forests, castles, palaces or kingdoms.

Regarding the treatment of time, although chivalric stories are not located in a specific moment, they are always set in the Middle Ages, and can allude to specific times, such as the appearance of Christianity or the Crusades (Rodríguez, 2016, p. 275). These references to real time disappear in Laura Gallego's novel, although the medieval setting is maintained throughout the work, perceptible thanks to, among other elements, the tournaments and jousts, the courtly atmosphere, the feudal society or the figure of the minstrel.

The magic character chronicler of the story: Oki, the minstrel

In all chivalric novels there are one or more magical characters –wise men, sorcerers, magicians...– who appear from time to time throughout the book, either on the side of the hero or on the side of his enemies. This way, all the wonderful events and elements of the story are justified, since magic is usually caused by some of those fantastic beings (Gallego, 2013, p. 151). In the Castilian chivalric genre, it was in *Amadís de Gaula* where this figure appeared for the first time, embodied in the magician Urganda the Unknown, as well as the one who fights against her, represented by Arcalaús the Enchanter. One and the other served as a model for the rest of chivalric novels (Gallego, 2013, p. 152). Sometimes, it is one of these characters who collects in writing the story of the heroes. For example, in *Belianís de Grecia*, it is

the wise man Fristón, enemy of Belianís and the magician Belonia, who appears as a chronicler of the knight's adventures. Despite the fact that they are only witnesses to those adventures in which they personally participate, their magical nature justifies that they know absolutely all the facts (Gallego, 2013, p. 160).

In *DLAC* there is also this magical chronicler character who, in this case, helps the heroine, represented in the figure of the minstrel Oki. He appears only three times throughout the entire work. The first is at the anniversary dinner of King Radis's coronation, when he tells the story of the spring of eternal youth; and the second, at the end of the first part, in the camp of those resistant to the barbarians, where he has a chat with Viana which encourages her to enter the Great Forest. In both cases, Oki appears simply as a minstrel with a passion for legends, without any particular magical characteristic; although, in the second appearance, he is surrounded by a halo of deep mystery, since it is not known how he has appeared in the camp, and the conversation with Viana is full of cryptic elements that she does not know how to interpret. There, her predisposition to help the protagonist is known, since that conversation with the minstrel is extremely motivating for her. However, despite the fact that, thanks to that talk, Viana decides to undertake the search for the legendary spring, Oki at no time encourages her to do so, but merely answers her questions, gives her the possible options and lets her be the one to decide totally with free will. This circumstance does not happen in chivalric novels, since the magicians and wise men who help the hero have a very active role in the story and their actions decisively influence the protagonists.

Oki's third appearance manifests the magical nature of the character. After several centuries have passed since Viana's death, and several generations have followed one another, the minstrel reappears at a dinner in the castle, thus revealing himself to the reader as an immortal being –and, therefore, magical–. As at the beginning of the novel, he explains that he is going to narrate a legend, but this time he chooses that about an ancestor of the king of Rocagrís, Viana, and the tree that still exists in the castle backyard. The very last fragment of the book reveals that Okinot only has collected the story and has been in charge of transmitting it, but he is also the narrator of the whole novel,

something that had not been made explicit until this moment. Like the chronicler magic characters of the books of chivalry, the minstrel has only been present in certain parts of Viana and Uri's adventure; however, his magical condition makes it possible for him to know it completely:

> Y así, a través de la magia de las palabras, fueron transportados hasta un tiempo remoto, mítico, en el que las doncellas podían desafiar a los reyes bárbaros... y en el que los árboles podían cantar.
> Y gracias a la voz de Oki, Uri y Viana renacieron una vez más, en la imaginación de sus oyentes, para volver a vivir su historia de amor sin fronteras.
> [And so, through the magic of words, they were transported back to a remote, mythical time when maidens could defy barbarian kings... and when trees could sing.
> And thanks to Oki's voice, Uri and Viana were reborn once again, in the imagination of their listeners, to relive their love story without borders.] (Gallego, 2011, p. 477).

While, in the chivalric genre, the role of chroniclers of these characters is made explicit from the beginning, as in *Belianís*, in *DLAC* it is only at the end when Oki is revealed to be the original transmitter of the story, and is the reader who must interpret that all the narration has been carried out by him. For this, there are certain clues in that last part of the book that show the metaliterary component of the work: it refers to the plot of the book itself, and it is «through the magic of words» and «thanks to Oki's voice» that Uri and Viana are reborn, that is to say , the story happens thanks to the minstrel, and it happens «in the imagination of his listeners». In this latter case, it is necessary to translate *listeners* by *readers*, since the original term is used in a medieval key and refers to orality, which, during the Middle Ages, was the way in which stories were made available to the general public. That task corresponded to the minstrels, so it is very significant that the author has chosen precisely that figure as the narrator of her novel. In reality, although it is in this part when it becomes explicit, the metaliterary component around Oki had already been anticipated

previously in the conversation between the minstrel and Viana, since it abounds in references to the fact that both are living a story, that Viana is the protagonist herself or that she may know the end of the story «in the mouth of someone» like him, which suggests his role of narrator:

> –Ahora tú debes decidir –concluyó Oki– si seguirás siendo una oyente o, por el contrario, saldrás en busca de tu propia historia.
> –¿Puede que tenga que ver con el manantial de la eterna juventud?
> –Tendrá que ver con la búsqueda del manantial de la eterna juventud –corrigió el juglar–. Pero solo si te arriesgas a vivir esa historia sabrás cómo concluye. A no ser, por supuesto, que esperes a que otra persona la viva por ti. Entonces es posible que dentro de un tiempo conozcas el final en boca de alguien como yo.
> Viana asintió de nuevo. Y esta vez sí lo entendía.
> –Puedo ser una espectadora –resumió– o puedo ser la protagonista de mi propia historia. Y eso conlleva riesgos.
> [–Now you must decide –concluded Oki– if you will continue to be a listener or, on the contrary, you will go out in search of your own story.
> –May it have to do with the spring of eternal youth?
> –It will have to do with the search for the spring of eternal youth –corrected the minstrel–. But only if you risk living that story you will know how it ends. Unless, of course, you wait for someone else to live it for you. Then it is possible that in a while you will know the end in the mouth of someone like me.
> Viana nodded again. And this time she did understand.
> –I can be a spectator –she summed up– or I can be the protagonist of my own story. And that carries risks.] (Gallego, 2011, pp. 216-217).

Transformations of human beings into plants

In *DLAC*'s epilogue, there are two scenes where a person magically turns into a plant. Both have their origin in the Hispanic literary tradition, although their respective sources are very different.

The first is Uri's «reconversion» into a tree, his original state, after the barbarians have been vanquished and his human form is no longer needed:

> Y empezó a cambiar. Su piel se volvió más oscura y rugosa y el cabello comenzó a crecerle hacia arriba de forma desordenada. Sus pies se hundieron en la tierra, sus brazos se alzaron hacia el cielo, buscando la vivificante luz del sol.
> –Uri... –susurró Viana–. ¡Uri, no! –gritó, desesperada, al comprender de pronto lo que estaba sucediendo.
> Corrió hacia él gritando su nombre, mientras el muchacho era cada vez menos humano, mientras de su pelo y sus dedos brotaban hojas tiernas, mientras su rostro desaparecía bajo la corteza, mientras sus piernas se fusionaban y de sus pies nacían raíces que se asentaban firmemente en el suelo.
> Viana se abrazó llorando a su cintura –a su tronco– sin dejar de repetir su nombre y de suplicarle que no se fuera, que no la dejara. Pero ni sus ruegos ni sus lágrimas lograron detener la transformación y, cuando el sol ya se alzaba en lo alto, Viana yacía a los pies de un árbol joven que erguía sus ramas con orgullo.
> [And he began to change. His skin became darker and rougher and his hair began to grow upward in a messy way. His feet sank into the ground, his arms raised heavenward, seeking the exhilarating light of the sun.
> –Uri... –Viana whispered–. Uri, no! –she cried, desperate, suddenly understanding what was happening.
> She ran towards him screaming his name, while the boy was less and less human, while his hair and fingers sprouted tender leaves, while his face disappeared under the bark, while his legs fused and his feet grew roots that settled firmly on the floor.
> Crying, Viana hugged his waist –his trunk– without stopping repeating his name and begging him not to go away, not to leave her. But neither her prayers nor her tears were able to stop the transformation and, when the sun was already high, Viana laid at the foot of a young tree that raised its branches proudly.] (Gallego, 2011, p. 471).

This episode is based on sonnet XIII by Garcilaso de la Vega –16th century–, which recreates the myth of Apollo and Dafne. In it, Apollo, full of love for the nymph, chases her, and she asks her father, the god Peneus, for help, so he transforms her into a laurel (Rivers, 1981, p. 101):

A Daphne ya los braços le crecían
y en luengos ramos bueltos se mostravan;
en verdes hojas vi que se tornavan
los cabellos quel oro escurecían;
de áspera corteza se cubrían
los tiernos miembros que aun bullendo 'stavan;
los blancos pies en tierra se hincavan
y en torcidas raýzes se bolvían.
Aquel que fue la causa de tal daño,
a fuerça de llorar, crecer hazía
este árbol, que con lágrimas regava.
¡O miserable 'stado, o mal tamaño,
que con llorarla crezca cada día
la causa y la razón por que llorava![1]

Despite the inversion of the sex of the transformed characters, both texts present a big parallelism. The first parts of each one –the quatrains of the sonnet and the first three paragraphs of the *DLAC* fragment–, describe in detail the metamorphosis of the person in a very similar way: both refer to the raising of the arms towards the sky, the appearance of bark, the leaves that emerge from the hair and fingers, the sinking of the feet into the ground, and both culminate with the conversion of these into roots.

The second parts –the two triplets of the sonnet and the last paragraph of the *DLAC* fragment– recount the crying of the untransformed character, Apollo in the poem and Viana in the novel, due to the metamorphosis of the other. The difference between both is that Apollo's tears strengthen Daphne's transformation, which does not happen in the case of Viana and Uri.

The other episode that contains a conversion from human to plant happens after Viana's death. She is buried at the foot of the tree –Uri– and, over time, from there grows a climbing plant that wraps around it:

[1] Due to questions of poetry translation, we only include the original version.

> Todo el mundo la lloró con amargura. Corven decidió enterrarla al pie del árbol porque sabía que eso es lo que ella habría querido. Mucha gente fue a visitar su tumba aquellos días, y hasta el propio árbol se mostró triste, con las ramas caídas y las hojas resecas, y permaneció mudo durante aquel largo invierno.
> Una mañana de primavera, sin embargo, un tímido brote emergió de la tierra. Las primeras lluvias y los rayos del sol alentaron su crecimiento, y lo convirtieron en una planta verde y radiante que enrolló su tallo en torno al tronco del árbol cantor.
> [Everyone wept bitterly for her. Corven decided to bury her at the foot of the tree because he knew that is what she would have wanted. Many people came to visit her grave in those days, and even the tree itself looked sad, with fallen branches and parched leaves, and remained silent during that long winter.
> One spring morning, however, a shy shoot emerged from the ground. The first rains and the rays of the sun spurred its growth, turning it into a radiant green plant that wound its stem around the trunk of the singing tree.] (Gallego, 2011, p. 474).

Although it is not made explicit in the novel, it is clear that this plant is the reincarnation of Viana. Her new vegetal condition allows the two lovers to live together again after she has passed away. The motif of lovers who, after death, and as a result of their eternal love, are reincarnated in plants that are born from their graves and intertwine, allowing them to continue being together, is recurrent in medieval Castilian ballads.

Ballads –in Spanish, *romances*– are non-strophic compositions of octosyllabic verses with assonance rhyme in the even ones, which seem to result from the division of the verses of ancient epic songs into two equal parts. In Spain, they are documented as autonomous poetic forms since 15th century, but their ancient provenance makes them may have roots in non-Hispanic traditions, which is why they sometimes share themes or motifs with them (Rodríguez, 2016, pp. 119-120). That is the case of the Castilian ballad of Tristan and Iseo, from a French epic song, compiled by Ramón Menéndez Pidal in his book *Flor nueva de romances viejos*. The poem ends with the burial

of the two lovers and the birth of a flower in the place where they lie –«allí donde los entierran / nace una azucena blanca [there where they are buried / a white lily is born]» (Pidal, 1976, p. 59)–. Although, in this case, there is only one plant, the source of this ballad, which is the legend of Tristan and Iseo, originally written in French, presents a double plant reincarnation: a vine grows from the tomb of Tristan and a rosebush grows from Iseo's, after which both plants intertwine, similar to the story of Viana and Uri:

> Por la noche, de la tumba de Tristán surgió una viña que se cubrió de hojas y ramas verdes. Sobre la tumba de Iseo creció un hermoso rosal de una semilla traída por un pájaro salvaje; las ramas de la viña pasaban por encima del monumento y abrazaban el rosal, mezclando sus flores, hojas y racimos con los capullos y las rosas. Y los antiguos decían que estos árboles enlazados habían nacido de la virtud del filtro y eran símbolo de los amores de Tristán e Iseo, a quienes la muerte no había podido separar.
> [At night, a vine grew from Tristan's tomb and was covered with green leaves and branches. On Iseo's grave, a beautiful rose bush grew from a seed brought by a wild bird; the branches of the vine passed over the monument and embraced the rosebush, mixing its flowers, leaves and bunches with the buds and roses. And the ancients said that these intertwined trees had been born from the virtue of the filter and were a symbol of the love of Tristan and Iseo, whom death had not been able to separate.] (Yllera, 2014, p. 233).

The same happens in the ballad of Count Olinos, also Castilian, compiled by Joaquín Díaz. After the murder of the count and the death of the infanta, both characters are buried and, from their respective graves, a hawthorn and a white rosebush are born, after which they get together. The union of the plants appears again as a symbol of the indestructible and eternal love between the two lovers. In this case, in addition, it is completed with a second reincarnation in birds (Fundación Joaquín Díaz, 2021):

La infantina con gran pena,
no dejaba de llorar;
él murió a la medianoche,
y ella a los gallos cantar.
A ella, como hija de reyes,
la entierran en el altar,
y a él, como hijo de condes,
cuatro pasos más atrás.
De ella nació un rosal blanco,
de él nació un espino albar;
crece el uno,crece el otro,
los dos se van a juntar.
La reina llena de envidia,
ambos los mandó cortar,
el galán que los cortaba
no dejaba de llorar.
De ella naciera una garza,
de él un fuerte gavilán,
juntos vuelan por el cielo,
juntos se van a posar.[2]

Conclusions

Throughout this work we have known the three main fantastic elements in the novel *DLAC* and its origin in the Hispanic medieval and Renaissance literary tradition. The first is the spatial setting, which resorts to imaginary and exotic places, as in books of chivalry, with a toponymy similar to that of these; as well as the setting of the story in a medieval age, represented by the events narrated and the elements described. The second is the existence of a magical character who, as in the chivalric genre, narrates the story: the minstrel Oki, who reveals himself as a chronicler at the end of the novel. And the last one is the motif of the lovers who die and are reincarnated in plants born from their graves, so that they can continue together thanks to their eternal

[2] See note 1.

love, a very frequent motif in medieval Castilian ballads that dates back to the earlier European literature.

By bringing to light all these elements, we intend to demonstrate the great literary quality that fantastic narrative considered «juvenile» can have. This novel, in particular, is a great example of this, since, in addition to the fantastic component, it has many more literary references worthy of study, such as medieval *exempla*, courtly love or the motif of the *virgo bellatrix*, which we have already analyzed in another work[3]. That masterful reinterpretation of the literary tradition, as well as the deep social and moral values it contains, is what gives the novel a deep artistic, pedagogical and academic interest.

[3] Rodríguez, A. (2021). La *virgo bellatrix* en la narrativa fantástica actual: el caso de *Donde los árboles cantan* (Laura Gallego). In Torres, C. *et al.* (Coords.), *Palabras entre la igualdad y la diversidad: replanteamientos sobre sexualidad y género en el ámbito de la Filología y la Didáctica* (pp. 31-41). Madrid, Spain: Dykinson. Retrieved from https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=8153312

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THE CARDBOARD FAIRY TALES OF LOTTE REINIGER

Elisa Martínez

> II. Surrender totally to your obsessions. You have nothing better anyway. Obsessions are the relics of childhood. And the most precious treasures come from the depths of childhood (Švankmajer, 1999).

Lotte Reiniger, born in 1899, was one of the most prolific female filmmakers in the history of cinematographic arts, with international recognition for her contribution as an animation artist and as a pioneering female film director. Her work is recognized by the most important scholars in animation studies, for example, she is one of the few women to whom Bendazzi (2003) devotes a section in his treatise on the history of animation, Reiniger's films and technique are studied in art and film schools, and her technique (silhouette animation) has been a source of inspiration for many artist who succeeded her, as Noburō Ōfuji and Michel Ocelot.

To create her work, she combined two apparently very simple elements, but together they give rise to a 60 year artistic career. These two elements are the black cardboard cut out silhouettes and the fairy tales, both from Reiniger's childhood. Silhouette cut out, *scherenschnitte* in German, has a long tradition in Europe, as will be explained below, and Lotte Reiniger practiced this craft since she was a child to the delight of her family and friends. In addition to handicrafts, her other childhood passion was fairy tales, the traditional folklore of Germany,

Reiniger's country of origin, is one of the fundamental precedents of this type of narrative.

From dreamer child to animation artist

In 1907, her grandmother took her to the cinema to watch *Sleeping Beauty,* she cried so much when she heard it was over that the projectionist showed it again, just for her.[1] When she was twelve years old she had made her first paper theatre, and so she could recreate her favourite fairy tales, over and over again.

> When other children were out playing, I was "animating" my silhouettes […] My parents were so pleased to see me sitting at home cutting out silhouettes as it was a peaceful hobby, and it didn't take up much room. I build my own shadow puppet theatre (Pilling, 1992).

In 1916, she attended a conference of Paul Wegener, the actor and director talked about the potential of animation, she was so impressed that she decided to enter the world of cinema and convinced her parents to enrol in the Max Reinhardt School to become an actress. Reiniger knew that Wegener drew from the school's talent pool for his films, casting students as extras and supporting actors. During the waiting times of the filming, she made cut out silhouettes of the actors; these silhouettes were published in the book *Schauspieler Silhouetten* in 1916 or 17. Some of those portrayed were Emil Jannings and Ernst Lubitsch who encouraged her to continue with this work and these silhouettes were seen by Wegener, who commissioned some for the intertitles of *Rübezahls Hochzeit* (Wegener, 1916).

In 1918, she also made silhouettes for the movie *Apokalypse* (Rochus Gliese, 1918); that year, Wegener hired her for his movie *Der Rattenfänger von Hameln* (Wegener, 1918) in which, in addition to the intertitles, she created complete scenes made with silhouettes and also the visual effects, being remarkable the rats made of wood and animated

[1] This anecdote, told by herself, is collected in Marschall, S., Bieberstein, and K. Schneider (2012). *Lotte Reiniger. Tanz der Schatten*. Berlin: Absolute Medien. However, no reliable information about the film and its director could be found.

with the stop motion technique. In 1919, she made visual effects in five films and joined the Institut für Kulturforschung, an institute founded with the intention of combining art and science, where film and animation as a form of plastic experimentation had a place. According to animation film scholar Bendazzi (2003), Wegener introduced her by jokingly saying «For God's sake, help me get rid of this silhouette freak. Can you let her make a movie with her silhouettes as cartoons?». She was admitted and there she made her first silhouette film; *Das Ornament des verliebten Herzens* (Fig. 1) is a stop-motion animated short film that combines abstract and expressionistic elements and is influenced by *Art Noveau*[2] aesthetics.

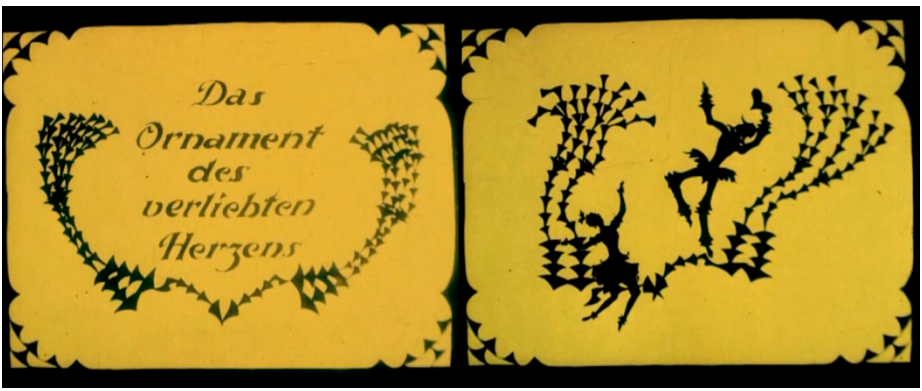

Figure 1: *Das Ornament des verliebten Herzens.* Lotte Reiniger (1919). Stills from the film.

A career that reaches an early and important milestone with the release of *Das Ornament des verliebten Herzens*, in 1919, which makes Lotte Reiniger the first female director in history dedicated to animated film, and therefore a reference for feminism, which is not only present in her life, but also in her work. For in it we will find "female characters who

[2] *Art Noveau* is a current of artistic renewal that occurred between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, with it the border between fine arts and applied and decorative arts is diluted, and we can see the artistic principles of this movement both in painting, as in advertising illustration, architecture or interior decoration. Some of its distinctive features are the taste for ornamentation based on nature, with curved and fluid shapes, fleeing from symmetry and geometry.

> do not always wait for Prince Charming to save them", as scholar María Lorenzo points out (Encinas, 2017).

Thus began her prolific career as a creator of animated fairy tales with cardboard silhouettes.

Cardboard silhouettes & drawn shadows

Lotte Reiniger named her works shadow films. We can go back, to talk about the precedents of these shadows, to the Chinese shadow theatres that have their origin in the Han dynasty (206 BC-220 AC), the *Wayang kulit*[3], or the metaphor used by Plato in the Myth of the Cavern; but herself told that her works was influenced by a most recent tradition, the portraits with silhouettes popular in Europe from the 18th century onwards, the children books illustrated with this technique and the paper theatres. Some literature has falsely attributed an inspiration of Reiniger's work to the Chinese shadows, which she herself denies. In this interview with Alfio Bastiancich, answers to the question:

> – Were any Chinese shadow theatres in Berlin?
> – No. There were puppets in the museums, which I didn't actually see until much later. It's not really true that I was influenced by Chinese shadow theatre (Pilling, 1992).

The word silhouette is an eponym that comes from Louis XV's Minister of Finance, Étienne de Silhouette, who imposed economic austerity measures, especially on the nobility, in France during the Seven Years' War (1756-1763). During those years, the expression «faire à la Silhouette» became popular, and its name came to be associated with everything that was cheaply made.

The economy of resources is the fundamental characteristic of the portraits made in silhouette that became popular in Europe from

[3] *Wayang kulit* is a type of traditional puppet theatre, whose shadows were projected onto a white screen, which has been performed in Malaysia and Indonesia since at least the 10th century.

the eighteenth century, it was a way to preserve the image of a person without resorting to the expensive miniatures or painted portraits, and thus the popular classes could access this type of image for the memory. These portraits, in addition to their low cost, had a unique quality; they were not the artist's interpretation, but the direct imprint of the real person, so that this silhouette was impregnated by the physical truth of the person portrayed.

Although hand scissors were available at the time, the predominant technique for creating a silhouette was to trace the shadow produced directly by the person to be portrayed. There were even devices, such as the physiognotrace[4] or the pantograph[5], which were intended to mechanize the work of outlining the silhouette.

With the birth of photography, silhouette portraits are relegated to the popular classes, even today you can still find artists who make them, for example among the caricaturists who offer their services in Montmartre (Paris). New applications of silhouettes also became widespread during the nineteenth century, such as advertising and the illustration of children's stories, which were much cheaper to reproduce than those produced with other techniques. Artists such as Paul Konewka or Karl Fröhlich (Fig. 2) were specialized in illustrating fables, poetry and fairy tales for children.

> All of this, points to a new definition of the silhouette: No longer a trace, a memento or a scientific aid, the form was now associated with a kind of visual "innocence" and with a new regime of children's pedagogy largely opposed to the "adult" world of photography (Cowan, 2013).

[4] The physiognotrace is an instrument for semi-automatically tracing the silhouette of a person from the projection of his or her shadow on a screen.

[5] The pantograph, precursor of the physiognotrace, is an articulated instrument consisting of connected parallel rods, which move with respect to a fixed point, its main use is to copy an image in order to enlarge it while maintaining the proportions.

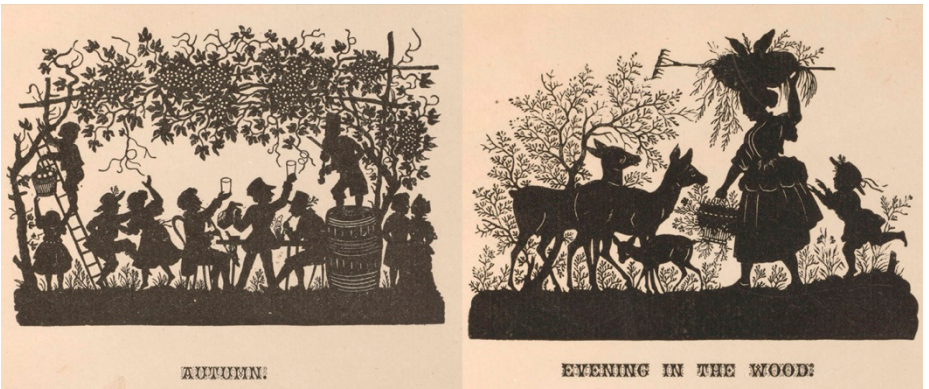

Figure 2: Karl Fröhlich's frolicks with scissors and pen. Karl Fröhlich (1898).

In these children's stories illustrated with silhouettes is where we find the direct precedents of Lotte Reiniger's work, in addition these cut-out silhouettes were part of the artistic activities in the girls' schools and Reiniger had great skill in making them.

> [...] I will attempt to answer the two questions I am nearly always asked by people who watch me making the silhouettes. Firstly: How on earth did you get the idea? And secondly: How do they move, and why are your hands not seen on the screen? The answer to the first is to be found in the short and simple history of my own life. I never had the feeling that my silhouette cutting was an idea. It so happened that I could always do it quite easily, as you will see from what follows. I could cut silhouettes as soon as I could manage to hold a pair of scissors. I could paint, too, and read, and recite: but these things did not surprise anyone very much. But everyone was astonished about the scissor cuts, which seemed a more unusual accomplishment. The silhouettes were very much praised, and I cut out silhouettes for all the birthdays in the family. Did anyone warn me as to where this path would lead? Not in the least; I was encouraged to continue (Reiniger, 1936, p. 13).

Another of the influences on the aesthetics and plastic of Reiniger's work are the paper theatres, as she herself tells in the anecdote mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, she had made her own at the age of 12. These theatres became popular in Europe from the early nineteenth

century; all over the continent, there was a great passion for the performing arts, and began to sell printed plates, which once cut and assembled gave shape to a theatre, actors and actresses included, with which to represent the preferred scripts of whoever acquired it.

Wonderful tales, from the German to the Oriental tradition

The term «fairy tale» comes from the German term *wundermärchen*, which can also be translated as «wonderful tale», which perfectly designates the quality of these stories to transport us to a magical world where fairies, goblins, giants and witches are possible. *Cinderella*, *the Frog Prince*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *Snow White* were some of the fairy tales made into films by Lotte Reiniger.

In Germany, there is a long tradition of legends and fables told orally from generation to generation, the basis of traditional folklore, which gave rise to a whole narrative, of which the Brothers Grimm were the greatest exponents in Germany. They collected traditional tales with the aim of providing the German people with a popular culture, in the context of an incipient nationalism, although in the end, they did not achieve their goal, and their tales ended up forming part of the universal narrative heritage.

> Reiniger embraced the shadows, but instead of continuing the popular Gothic themes riddled with dark thoughts and depression, she animated fairy tales. Any reader of the original fairy tales knows these versions are dark, filled with blood, gore and death, and they would be deemed inappropriated for children by modern standard... By using silhouette animation, however, she did revert to the "dark side" of German film expressionism but, pulling on earlier romantic aspects she presented a lighter happier take on fairy tales although intense emotion is expressed via the puppet "acting" (Whitney, 2017).

In addition to these stories inherited from German mythology, and their updating in children's stories, Lotte Reiniger's work draws from oriental narrative. Her beginnings in cinema are contemporary to the *Art*

Deco[6] movement, which impregnated art, design, architecture, etc. with *Orientalism*[7] (or a European interpretation of it). One of hers most popular films *Die Abenteuer des Prinzen Achmed* (Fig. 3), is based on one of the stories of *The Thousand and One Nights*, other works inspired by the Orient are *The Chinese Nightingale* (1927) or *Aladdin and the Magic Lamp* (1954). Another of the narrative sources of her work, were great operas such as Bizet's *Carmen* or Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, whose music was used as a soundtrack.

Figure 3: *Die Abenteuer des Prinzen Achmed*. Lotte Reiniger (1926). Stills from the film.

[6] *Art Deco* is an artistic and aesthetic movement, influenced by the artistic avant-garde of the early twentieth century, which evolved from Art Nouveau, and as in this, there are no boundaries between the visual and decorative arts (the very name «deco» is an apocope of the French word *décoratif*) and there are manifestations of this current in painting, architecture, illustration or furniture design. However, its stylistic principles are very different from Art Noveau, if in the latter the curved line was a fundamental feature, in *Art Deco*, the straight line, symmetry and geometric inspiration are its basic characteristics, and although there is inspiration in the natural world, it is always from the reduction to the minimum essence.

[7] *Orientalism* was part of the taste and interests of the bourgeoisie of the time, the fondness for archaeology and travel to exotic places were very popular among the wealthy classes. Great artists such as Eugène Delacroix or Mariano Fortuny cultivated the representation of prints of a dreamed east, in which exotic paradises, palaces, arenas, were part of the European fantasy that idealized (based on clichés) these remote places. In both *Art Noveau* and *Art Deco* there was a touch of *Orientalism*, which can be found in various cultural manifestations of the time. This was reflected in the great success of theatrical and operatic productions, such as Cleopatra and the translation into various European languages of *The Thousand and One Nights*, even in fashion, it was common for women to adorn themselves with turbans or wear bloomers as extravagant gala wear.

A lifetime telling cardboard fairy tales

Lotte Reiniger dedicated her entire artistic career to creating these animated fairy tales with cardboard silhouettes, first in Germany, and then, after a journey through France, Italy and Greece fleeing Nazism, she settled in the United Kingdom where she founded the production company *Primrose Films* with her husband and cameraman Karl Koch.

Between *Das Ornament des verliebten Herzens* (1919) and *The Rose and the Ring* (1979), made two years before the artist's death, there are 60 years and 42 cinematographic works, all made with the same technique and belonging to the same narrative tradition.

This technique was refined film by film, Reiniger's skill in cutting and animation is more impressive in each work, and not only in terms of the realization of silhouettes, with increasingly stylized, ornate and beautiful figures. Also in terms of the movement of these, achieving expressiveness with the movements with which Reiniger manages to convey all the nuances of emotional, with special attention to the animation of the hands. She also implemented filming techniques, with three-dimensional backgrounds filmed with the multi-plane table that Reiniger invented, and which was later adapted by Disney and Fleischer studios.

Figure 4: The German silhouette animation film artist Lotte Reiniger in London. Chistel Strobel (s.f.).

However, it is striking that during six decades of career, Reiniger did not have the restlessness to work with other techniques or to evolve aesthetically, it seems that, somehow, she did not want to abandon the child she had been, and thus, she continued to put into practice her childhood hobbies, making them the engine of her cinematographic work. If we continue reading the Decalogue of the Czech animator Jan Švankmajer quoted at the beginning of this chapter, he writes:

> All your obsessions and your entire childhood will be transferred to the film, before you even consciously realize it. Your film will be a triumph of infantilism. And that's what it's all about (Švankmajer, 1999).

In the case of Lotte Reiniger's work these premises are fulfilled to the letter, two elements or «obsessions» of her childhood shape the aesthetics, the plastic and the narrative of her entire filmography. Many artists belonging to movements such as *Dada*, *Surrealism* and *Expressionism* saw childhood as a source of inspiration as a creative force, and tried to recover the instinct, spontaneity and freedom of the first years of life to face their artistic work.

Lotte Reiniger lived in Berlin at the same time as other avant-garde artists working in the field of animation, Oskar Fischinger, Hans Richter and Walter Ruttman, who created non-narrative, abstract works based on simple formal elements such as geometric shapes, strokes and stains, this audiovisual work was defined as «absolute cinema» by the critic and theorist Rudolf Kurtz. While these aspired to modernity, Reiniger's work does not seek to break with the established, nor to be plastically novel. Perhaps because of this, her work was regarded in artistic and academic circles as naïve and popular, in a derogatory sense, and her work for decades was not taken seriously. In a letter sent to animation film scholar Giannalberto Bendazzzi, Reiniger recounts that Ruttman8 was quite embarrassed to collaborate on a fairy tale like *Die Abenteuer des Prinzen Achmed* making visual effects.

[8] Both Ruttman and Fischinger were involved in Reiniger's feature film *Die Abenteuer des Prinzen Achmed*, makig visual effects.

She was the first woman to direct a feature-length animated film, and her career was a condition of possibility for subsequent women to work in this field, telling the stories they wanted to tell, directing their projects, and creating their own visual languages. It was not until 2013 that Brenda Chapman won the *Oscar* prize for best animated film for *Brave*. From the pioneers of animation such as Reiniger herself, Helena Smith Dayton, Mary Ellen Bute, Evelyn Lambart or Claire Parker, to that moment in 2013, there is a 100-year journey in which women were relegated to «decorative» work in the big animation film industry, designing backgrounds or characters, coloring, cleaning lines or working on concept art. Those who wanted to have their own voice, had to work independently, in their small home studios, looking for funding and often without their work being known by the general public, or left aside in academic circles.

Reiniger's work, now recognized by the public and the academy, inspires women and men artists who want to follow their own path, without the impositions of the market or cultural trends. Lotte Reiniger created all her cinematographic work following a childlike instinct, without aspiring to modernity or avant-garde, looking for a timeless and universal beauty.

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DIGITAL ADVANCES IN ANIMATION, FROM TRADITIONAL TO DIGITAL ANIMATION

María Amor Díaz García

The Integration of Digital and Traditional Animation

Animation has long held close links to the fantastic genre. The transition from traditional to digital animation developed new production methods and created a different way of making animated films. However, one should never forget that traditional animation provides the basis for the underlying structures of digital animation.

Digital animation with abstract shapes has been developing with graphics since the 1950s.When Saul Bass created the title sequence for Alfred Hitchcock's film *Vertigo*, he contracted John Whitney, a pioneer in the field of Motion Graphics. For his animation, Whitney used an analogue computer built in the late 1950's modifying the mechanism of the M-5 anti-aircraft system used during World War II. This computer was called *The Oscilloscope*.

Animation started to embrace the digital age in the 1990s. The workflow of traditional animation became key in this process of digitalization. This change represented a radical development in the process of making both animated series and movies. The impact was enormous and traditional animators had to understand and relearn their craft.

The big studios began to incorporate computers and software into their animation departments. Traditionally they'd employed animators (or key framers) and teams of inbetweeners. Digital

versions of these roles were soon required, although in many cases the new digital operators lacked the requisite animation background. Traditional animators were faced with a need to adapt and learn this new technology. They often rejected these new digital tools.

Digital animation began with the *Ink and Paint* department (colouring of frames).In this process the entire team, mostly women, began to colour all the frames by computer instead of hand colouring cell by cell. One of the programs used for digital colouring was *Animo*, a software program developed by Cambridge Animation Systems, and used during the 1990s and part of the 2000s by such important studios as DreamWorks, Nelvana, Fox Animation, Flick Films, and Telemagination. Digital frame colouring gave enormous benefits such as being able to change an entire scene simply by modifying the colour model that was being used.

Traditionally the animator had created key drawings or frames. The next part of the process was to create the intermediate frames. This work was carried out by the animation assistants, more commonly known as inbetweeners. Before starting the Ink and Paint process, the animator's sketches were scanned. This created a reference that was used to later compose the exposure sheet or shooting chart. Traditionally the exposure sheets were sent to those in charge of the rostrum camera[1], placed near where the film was edited. The digital exposure sheet followed a similar process. In the digital system once they'd been scanned, the drawings were pre-processed in the *image processing* module, where the software recognized the animator's strokes as areas that could then be coloured in the Ink and Paint module. The automated colouring of all the frames was fast and efficient. It was also possible to work with strokes to create blur and shadow effects.

Before passing through the Ink and Paint module, *colour models* were created. In this section not only the colour model was developed, but also different colour palettes could be created

[1] A rostrum camera is a specially designed camera used in television production and filmmaking to animate a still picture or object. It consists of a moving lower platform on which the article to be filmed is placed, while the camera is placed above on a column. Many visual effects can be created from this simple setup, although it is most often used to add interest to static objects.

that were very effective when performing the compositing work. The compositing module managed and composed different layers and scenes. These palettes could, for example, create the same colour model of a character during the day and another colour palette of that character at night. When the Ink and Paint process was carried out, it was only necessary to colour the frames of that character with one of the palettes, since in the compositing module, replacing that specific colour palette with another, meant that all the drawings would change colour automatically and the different palettes that made up the colour model could be animated.

In the colour model, all the colours were registered. This ensured there would be no gamut changes in the different monitors being employed which could cause a jump in the animation. The colour models also recorded the stroke registers. For example, colouring and blur effects could appear when colouring some part of the character.

At studios like Disney, this process would begin with a program called CAPS (Computer Animation Production System), which Disney developed themselves. The first coloured scene appeared in *The Little Mermaid*, specifically in the last scene where all the characters meet, and a rainbow appears. This was the only scene of the film that was digitally colorized in order to see the final result that this new technique could produce, without risking an entire production. After this scene of *The Little Mermaid* was digitally colorized with very satisfactory results, it was decided that in the next film, *The Rescuers Down Under* directed by Mike Gabriel and Hendel Butoy in 1990, digital colorization would be used throughout the entire production.

At that time, Disney's infrastructure was not set up to work digitally as we now understand it. In the beginning, only some of the animators entered the digital colouring department, which Disney was just starting to set up, and this system was not available for sale and was only used within the company. Only some Disney workers were asked to employ the new digital tools and it would not be until much later when the digital departments began to occupy the entire Disney infrastructure.

Until the mid-2000s, the CAPS system continued to be used for 2D digital animation, but Disney began to realize that 2D animated films

were beginning to disappear in favour of 3D animation, which led to them closing the 2D animation department, as it had been until that moment, leaving only one workstation. *Tiana and the Toad* was one of their last 2D animated productions, but even here they used the *Animo* software, since the workstations that had CAPS software installed had already been made obsolete. This accelerated the fall of 2D animation and the increasing dominance of 3D animation.

2D Digital Software: *Animo*

In the progression of 2D digital animation, there was another digital system which soon became popular with other production companies. This software was *Animo* and it was developed by CAS (Cambridge Animation Systems).

Peter Florence who had also worked at the Moving Picture Company, was one of the founders of CAS. For their software development, CAS created a digital system with different modules:

Scanning Module:

In this module the animator's drawings were scanned into the computer (thus maintaining the link with the technique of traditional drawing). Also, in this module the backgrounds and overlays were scanned, in some cases a background was reused and an alpha channel was applied to it in the compositing module to create an overlay.

Image Processing Module:

In this module the drawings were processed to close shapes and so be able to colour them digitally.

Ink and Paint Module:

In this module the individual frames were coloured.

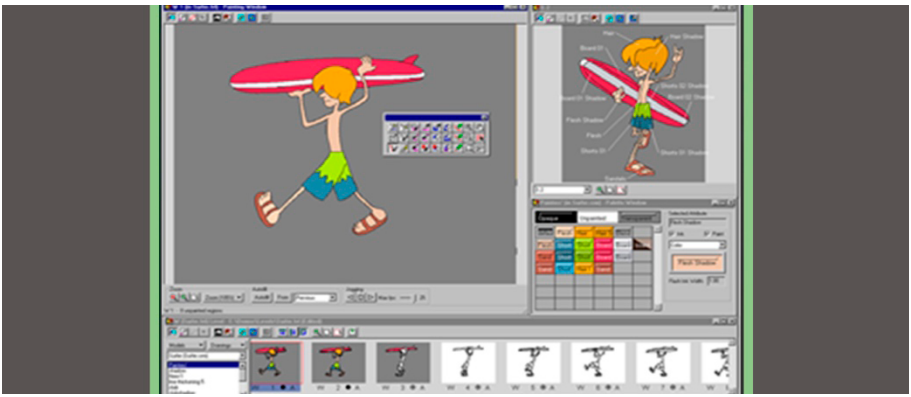

Figure 1: Module Ink and Paint, programme *Animo*.
Source: http://www.animo.com/animo6/animo6.html

Director Module:

In this module the scene was composited. It was also where the exposure sheet was found. Here different layers were created if they required animating(i.e. the background, the head of a character, an arm, and the rest of the body). The exposure sheet was made to composite the scene, as indicated by the animation director.

Inside the Director module we had different windows such as:

The Node and Effects Window:

In this window the effect or movement that carried the scene was selected. It was mounted with the node system, as is currently the case in *Toom Boom* or programs like *Nuke*.

The Compositing Window:

This window provided the ability to visualise what was being done in the complete scene along with a camera which allowed the process of different actions.

The Render Window:

In this window the animation could be produced and if it was already ready, it would be rendered or processed and sent to post-production.

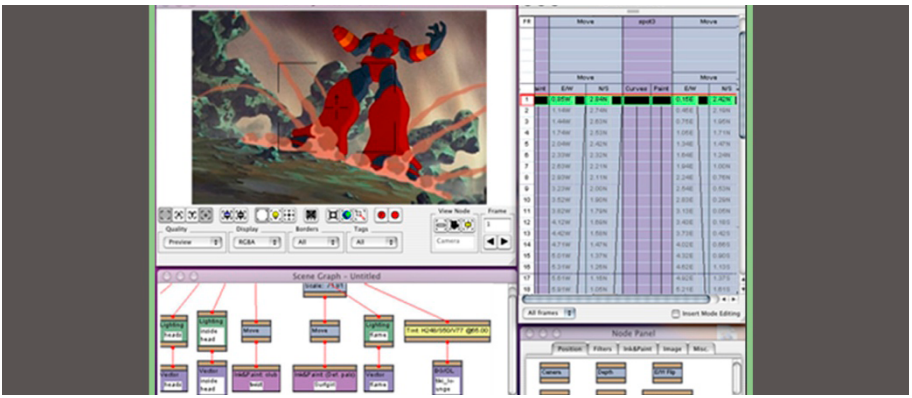

Figure 2: Module Director.
Source: http://www.animo.com/animo6/

The whole process was fast and cost-saving, this meant the disappearance of colouring and mounting with the rostrum camera, which was how it had been done traditionally.

The software program *Animo* was used in large companies such as DreamWorks. In its first animated feature *The Prince of Egypt*, DreamWorks used *Animo* for the entire 2D animation sequence, performing the 3D animation sections with *Alias Wavefront*, a software which is known today as *Maya*.

In the mid-2000s *Animo* was purchased by *Toom Boom*, a Canadian company that created what is now known as *Toom Boom Animation*, the present market leader in 2D digital animation.

It also should be added that *Animo* in its early versions had a vector module, where animations used a skeleton system, a pioneer at that time when it came to 2D animation. This system was used for example in the *Spacee* cartoon series produced for *Sesame Street* by German Television, based in Hamburg. They also used it in the development of multimedia CDs, being one of the first interactive

animations where characters made using an *Animo* skeleton would interact with the user.

This digital transformation affected the production of 2D animated films. This change in the 1990s was behind the development of the first 3D animation films. *The Beauty and The Beast* was one of the first films to integrate 2D and 3D digital animation. In this 1991 movie, produced by Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise, 3D backgrounds were combined with 2D character animation. In this digital challenge Scott Johnston[2] was also involved. He developed *Renderman* rendering software, for the realization of the dance scene. This software is used for the processing of images made with 3D software and is still employed today. *Renderman* created a great visual impact in the execution of the dance scene where the 3D background integrates perfectly with the 2D animation of the characters. Today we can consider it as a starting point in the creation of animated films integrating 2D animation and 3D animation.

Scott Johnston explained:

> First of all, it was a bunch of people that did it. It was a very specific, separate moment from the rest of the production. It lives in a bubble. At the beginning of the sequence, you move into this environment, you have this moment of characters falling in love or dancing, this magical moment gave you to another level, afterwards they left the room and that´s when it started the rest of the film.

Renderman would be used in conjunction with Maya's 3D modelling software to create the elements that made up the background of the scene. It was also employed alongside *Softimage* for animation. At this time it was normal to make animation films using different software for each different section. *Renderman* provided the textures and lighting that give the scene such an elegant and sublime air.

[2] Scott F. Johnston founded Fleeting Image Animation, Inc. in 1997 to develop and produce animation combining traditional and digital techniques.

Figure 3: Scene from *The Beauty and The Beast*, made in 2D and 3D.
Source: http://disneyfansite.iespana.es/jose/websjose/la_bella_y_la_bestia.html

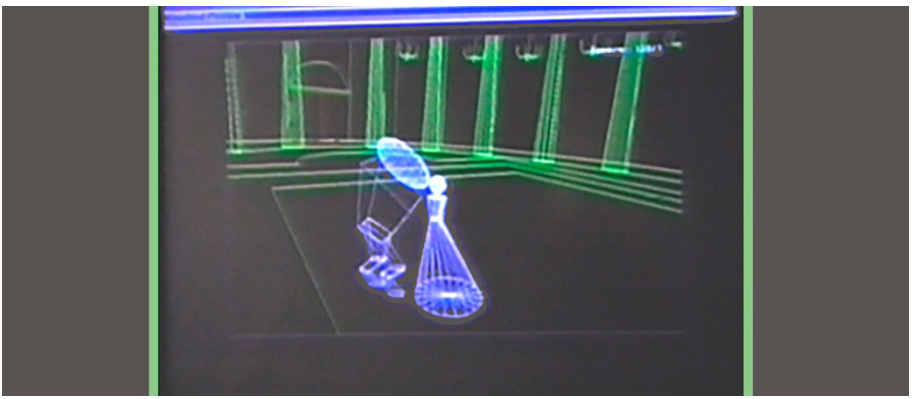

Figure 4: Example test made for *The Beauty and The Beast* in the computer.
Videoframe published in the Spanish TV programme *Tras la 2*
(October 28, 2009).

With the background modeled in 3D, the three-dimensional camera could move around the entire stage without the need to make the multiple background drawings typically employed in traditional

animation. The multiplane camera[3] was a method used by Disney for the first time in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and to this day continues to be used in 2D animation, allowing that feeling of depth as if we were using a three-dimensional camera.

With the 3D camera and the three-dimensional backgrounds, the integration of 2D animation with 3D animation reached its highest point. All these digital advances meant a change both in the business model, with the creation of new animation studios dedicated exclusively to digital production, and in artistic development with a total revolution in the method of making animated films. This has led to the growth of the fantasy genre and today's production of video games and special effects.

New companies, like DreamWorks and Fox Animation, were created thanks to the development of digital animation software. In the case of DreamWorks, its first animated film was *The Prince of Egypt* directed by Brenda Chapman, Steve Hickner and Simon Wells in 1998. For the colouring and composition of the 2D digitally animated scenes, they used *Animo* software. For the 3D backgrounds *Alias Wavefront* software was employed (it's now known as *Maya* and is an *Autodesk* product). In these 3D backgrounds the camera allowed flight and more spectacular perspectives when carrying out the movements, which were then given to the traditional animator who, with that reference, made the 2D drawings, still on paper, which were later sent to the scanner module and then to the Ink and Paint digital module to end up in the Director module.

So-called *exclaves* were also used in this integration of 2D and 3D digital animation. Exclaves were characters created using 3D software with specific characteristics such as walking and physical structure; thousands of them could be created allowing a crowd scene to be made in a faster and cheaper way than if they had been created traditionally. Only the characters in the foreground were made with drawings and then the scene was composited with the drawings made by the animator with the exclaves produced by the computer.

[3] The camera, focusing from a vertical position, allows operators to alter the speed, direction of travel and the zoom factor of each of these planes, thus generating an illusion of depth and three-dimensionality.

Fox Animation, a subsidiary of Twenty Century Fox, was another of the companies that was created in this period. This new company produced *Anastasia* as their first animated feature in 1997 under the direction of Don Bluth and Gary Goldman, former Disney animators. In this case, the digital software used for the animation of the 3D backgrounds was Softimage and for the 2D digital animation, the software *Toonz* was employed for colouring and digital compositing of the drawings made by the animators. *Toonz* was owned by Softimage, which meant savings and fewer problems when integrating 3D files and 2D files.

Conclusion

In the transition from traditional to digital animation, there was a very important change at an economic level. Production costs were lowered, which caused an increase in companies that were dedicated to the production of animation, removing the market dominance that until then had been held by Disney.

The animator's profile began to change; traditional animators had to understand the operation and the new pipeline that were being implemented in the animation studios due to this new digital infrastructure. The roles of the 2D digital animator in charge of the tasks of Ink and Paint and Compositing and the 3D digital animator were created. Some of these traditional animators were able to acclimatize to these new ways of working, thanks to the training given at animation studios by software companies such as CAS (Cambridge Animation Systems).

On the other hand, 3D animation production was dissimilar since its animation model had not developed directly from traditional animation. Its line of work was completely different. It was only possible to learn these new animation methods in specialized master's degrees with dedicated computers and software. Only the big companies could afford to pay for this new infrastructure,

In the present-day 3D animation has taken over almost the entire cinematic animation market, although not so much in television, where some series are still made in 2D. Even if the training of all animators

continues to start from the principles of traditional animation, their profile, if they want to be gainfully employed, must now contain a digital background.

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